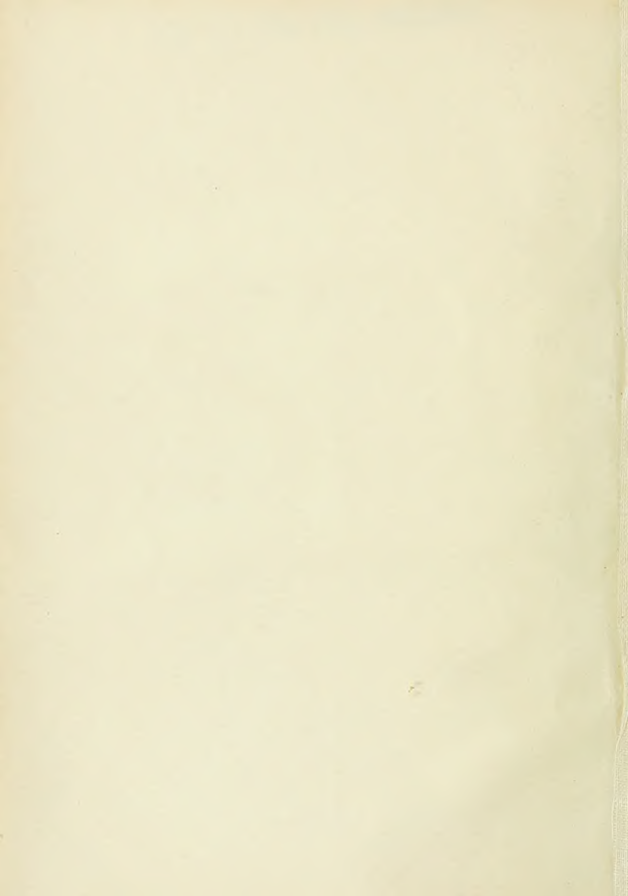
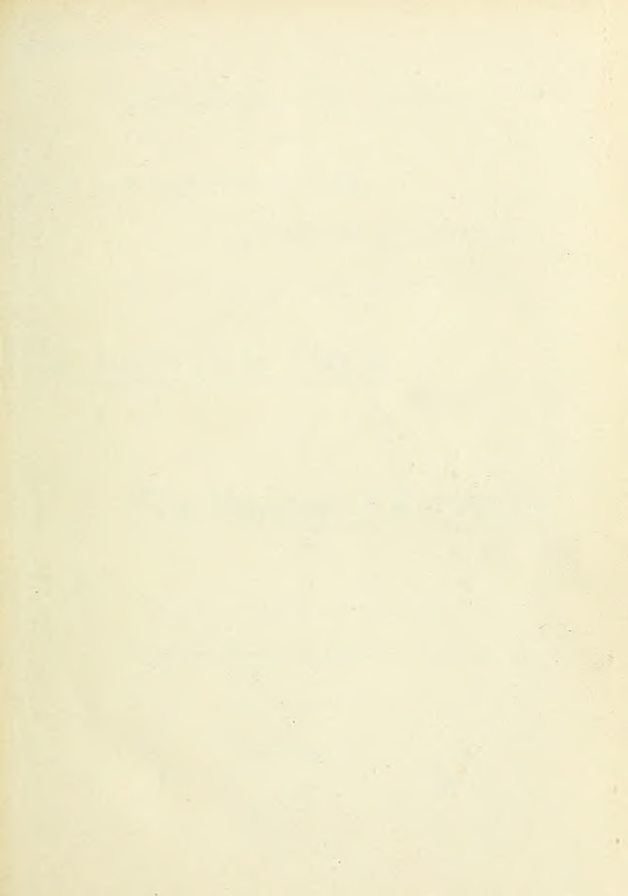
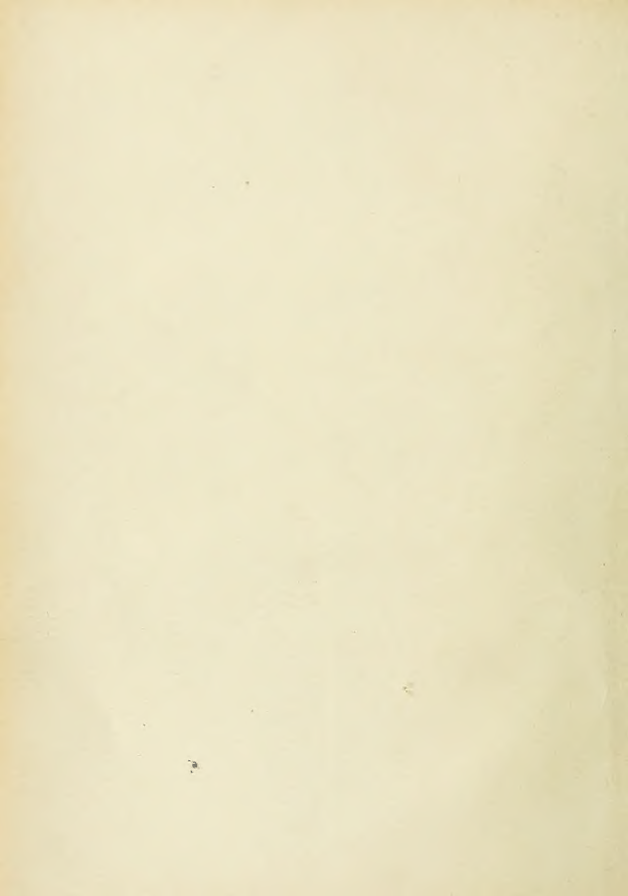

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FRENCH-AND-ENGLISH EDITION

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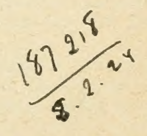
LAURENTIAN STORIES

Le rosier de la Vierge

The Madonna's Rosebush

The French by B. M. Victorin

with the translation by JAMES FERRES



MONTREAL

1922

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

The translator deems it a privilege to place before his fellow-Canadians and others an English version of the series of short stories by B. M. Victorin, and, in order that the charm and beauty of the works of this author may be more fully appreciated, the original and the translation are presented on opposite pages in the same volume.

It is a new departure to offer stories in this form, but it is hoped that the reading may prove an easy and pleasant way of acquiring a better knowledge of " the other " language.

Negotiations are progressing favorably for the adoption of this series as text-books in certain of the Schools.

It is the translator's hope that these little volumes may also be found useful to the general public, as the advantage of a practical knowledge of " the other " language is universally recognized.

Any medium which will tend to promote a more intimate knowledge of the literature and the mental attitude of our French-speaking fellow-citizens, seems worthy of welcome, because, with better acquaintance, a closer sympathy, a more fully cordial entente is always possible, no matter how friendly may be the relations between the two great sections of our people.

The translator has in some cases found it advisable to deviate from the strict letter of the text, in order to conform his work with the idiom and usage of worthy writers

of English. These variations include an occasional use of adverbs for adjectives, and change in the tense of verbs, but he hopes that his version will be approved as a closely correct rendering, although necessarily lacking in that delicacy and indefinable charm which is inherent in the work of B. M. Victorin.

The author of " Recits Laurentiens " was born in the Province of Quebec, and still has his home here, His own heart and mind are an index to the heart and mind of his people, and his works in literature and science, which have gained for him much prestige in his own Province, must assuredly secure for him a large measure of distinction elsewhere.

These stories, as a rule, are based on actual occurrences, with which he had close relation.

" Ne vends Pas la Terre " " The Old Farm Not For Sale."

It was the father of his friend and colleague, who refused the temptation of a large sum of money offered for the homestead which had been in the possession of the family for more than two hundred years.

" La Croix de Saint Norbert ". " The Wayside Cross."

It was his great-grand-father who, as the first pioneer to set foot in the forest near Saint Norbert, erected a Cross on the day of his arrival. Its successor, plain and weather-worn, still stands by the wayside.

" La Corvée des Hamel." " The Chopping Bee."

It was his grand-uncle whose heart was broken by his being obliged to cut down his beautiful ancestral elm.

" Le Rosier de la Vierge." " The Madonna's Rosebush."

His grandmother related to him, as a child, the story of the Madonna's wonderful rosebush.

" Sur le Renchaussage." " Farming on the Embankment."

It is his own picture which he draws as the little boy-farmer of the embankment, whose spare time was given to trout-fishing, berry-picking, pranks and picnics.

" Charles Roux." " Charles Roux."

It was his own adventure which brought him into friendship with the pathetically mis-understood Charles Roux.

"Jacques Maillé." "The Northern Colonist."

It is his own genius which has conceived, and spread upon enduring canvas for our interest, yes, and for our tears, the affecting story of the " Northern Colonists ", with their donation of two hundred loads of fire wood (a fact) to the poor of Montreal.

The scenes of his stories are laid in that demesne which lies in the happy midway between poverty and riches; in a land throbbing with steady, honest toil and homely joys, and marked by devotion to its Church. These scenes surround his own home, and the homes of his relatives, and the readers of the original will surely admit that he views them with the eye of an artist, and describes them with a poet's pen.

The translator feels that, however imperfect his own work may be, if it serves to bring the attention of lovers of true literature to the little master-pieces produced on our own soil by B. M. Victorin, it will by no means have been done in vain.

JAMES FERRES

131 Stanley St.,

Montreal. November 1922

Le Rosier de la Vierge

Est-il bien vieux, grand'mère, le rosier de l'église ?...

— Oh ! mes enfants ! Il est plus vieux que moi ! J'ai soixante-quinze ans et je l'ai toujours vu là, sous le clocher, au bord de la niche.....

— Mais qui donc est allé le planter si haut ?...

— On ne sait pas !

— Mais pourquoi, demanda l'un des plus jeunes, que le curé, *il* ne l'a pas fait arracher ?..

— Ça, mes petits enfants, c'est une histoire ! Je l'ai entendu conter par mon grand-père, le défunt Jacques Hamel !...

THE MADONNA'S ROSEBUSH



RANDMOTHER, is that rosebush growing on the Church wall very old ? " Oh, children, it is older than I am. I am seventy-five, and I have always seen it there, just under the steeple, beside the niche."

" But who was it that went and planted it so high up ? "

" Nobody knows ".

" But why," asked one of the youngest, "why didn't the Curé have it pulled down ?"

" That, my dear children, that is a story ! I heard it told by my grandfather, Jacques Hamel !"

— Oh ! *mémère !* contez-nous l'histoire du rosier !...

Sans attendre la reponse, tous, fillettes en tablier à manches et aux cheveux nattés, petits gars ébouriffés, barbouillés de la poussière et de la sueur du jeu, nous nous groupâmes sur les cinq marches qui conduisaient dans le parterre, tout parfumé ce soir-là de la forte haleine des muguets et des pruniers en fleur. Et grand'mère étant allée quérir son tricotage, nous raconta l'histoire du rosier.

Je vous la transcris fidèlement.

Il faut d'abord savoir que si l'Ancienne-Lorette est aujourd'hui un petit village bien français et le plus tranquille des villages, il n'en a pas toujours été ainsi. Les pauvres débris de la nation huronne, chassés des rivages de la Mer Douce par les féroces Iroquois, vinrent d'abord se réfugier à la pointe ouest de l'Ile d'Orléans. Traqués jusque dans cette retraite par la haine attentive de leurs ennemis, ils furent ensuite placés sous la protection immédiate du canon français, aux portes mêmes de Québec

" Oh ! Grandma, tell us the story about the rosebush !"

Without waiting for an answer, all of us, little girls in pinafores and braided hair, little untidy boys, dusty and damp from their play, we all grouped ourselves on the five steps which led to the garden, all perfumed as it was that evening by the sweet scent of the lilies of the valley and the plumtrees in blossom. And grandmother, having first gone to get her knitting, told us the story of the rosebush.

I will set it down just as it was told to me.

You must first know that if Ancienne Lorette is today entirely French, and the most peaceful of villages, it has not always been like this. The poor remnant of the Huron Nation, driven from the shores of the freshwater Sea by the fierce Iroquois, came for refuge first to the western point of the Island of Orleans. Pursued even in this retreat by the persistent hatred of their enemies, they were then placed under the immediate protection of the French guns, quite near the gates of Quebec, and later, at

et plus tard, à Sainte-Foy. Mais il semblait que le sort de la tribu était de ne pouvoir fixer nulle part ses wigwans d'écorce et bientôt, conduits par leur saint missionnaire le P. Chaumonot, les Hurons passèrent dans la seigneurie de Saint-Gabriel que les Jésuites possédaient à trois lieues de Québec et qui n'est autre que l'Ancienne-Lorette. La bourgade fut d'abord appelée Nouvelle-Lorette, à cause de la chapelle que, dans sa vénération pour le célèbre sanctuaire italien, le P. Chaumonot édifia sur le plan de la *Santa Casa* et qui devint bientôt un lieu de pèlerinage très fréquenté. Le comte de Frontenac allait y faire ses dévotions et l'on y vit un jour l'ange de Ville-Marie, Marguerite Bourgeoys, prosternée aux pieds d'une statue de la Mère de Dieu envoyée d'Italie au P. Chaumonot, vers 1674 par le P. Poncet.

Les historiens prétendent bien que la célèbre Madone n'a pas quitté Sainte-Foy, ou que la statue authentique est celle que l'on vénère aujourd'hui à la Jeune-Lorette, et bien d'autres choses encore ! Mais les historiens sont des

Saint Foy. But it seemed to be the luck of the tribe, not to find any place where they could set up their birch-bark wigwams, and soon, led by their sainted Missionary, Father Chaumonot, the Hurons went over into the Seignory of Saint Gabriel, about nine miles from Quebec, which was owned by the Jesuits, and which is no other than Ancienne Lorette. The borough was first called New Lorette, because of the chapel which Father Chaumonot built on the plan of the Santa Casa, owing to his respect for the celebrated Italian sanctuary. This chapel soon became a much frequented shrine for pilgrims. Count de Frontenac used to go there to pay his devotions, and one day the Angel of Ville Marie, Margaret Bourgeoys, was seen doing homage at the feet of a statue of the Madonna, which had been sent from Italy to Father Chaumonot by Father Poncet about 1674.

Historians claim that the celebrated Madonna has not left Saint Foy, or that the authentic statue is the one which is today venerated at Jeune-Lorette; and they say a lot of other things besides. But historians are tire-

gens ennuyeux qui ne connaissent rien aux belles histoires ; je les invite à aller voir la Vierge des Hurons dans le coin de la luxueuse église de l'Ancienne-Lorette où elle est aujourd'hui reléguée.

Cette statue en bois, assez grande, ne ressemble en rien aux Vierges qu'affectionne le goût moderne. Les cheveux fortement bouclés s'échappent d'une sorte de bandeau égyptien qui couvre la tête ; la draperie de la robe et du manteau est compliquée, d'un art naïf et charmant. La Vierge, la tête légèrement inclinée en avant, semble parler : sa main gauche s'abaisse vers la terre tandis que la droite, de ses deux doigts levés, montre le ciel. Le galbe étrange de cette figure semble avoir été taillé tout exprès par l'artiste italien pour plaire aux squaws qui venaient autrefois, au petit jour, enveloppées dans leurs couvertures multicolores, s'accroupir aux pieds de la Madone.

Or donc, en 1697, les Hurons, ayant à leur habitude épuisé la terre et la forêt, décidèrent d'émigrer encore, de transporter leurs pénates

some people who don't know anything about really nice stories. I tell them they can go and see the Madonna of the Hurons in the corner of the splendid church at Ancienne Lorette, where she is today enshrined.

This wooden statue, rather large, is not at all like the Madonnas which follow the present day taste. The hair escapes in close curls from a sort of Egyptian fillet which binds the head ; the drapery of the robe and cloak is intricate, in a fresh and charming style. The Madonna, with head slightly inclined forwards, seems to be speaking, her left hand is lowered towards the ground, while the right, with two fingers uplifted, is pointing to heaven. The strange outline of this figure seems to have been cut by the Italian artist on purpose to please the squaws who used formerly to come in the early morning, wrapped in their many-colored blankets, to sit at the feet of the Madonna.

Then in 1697, the Hurons, having as usual with them, used up the land and the trees, made up their minds to go away again, to carry

sur les bords ravinés et grondants du Cabir-Coubat, au lieu qui s'appelle depuis, la Jeune-Lorette, pour la distinguer de l'autre, qui devint du fait l'Ancienne-Lorette. Les sauvages ne se firent pas faute d'emporter de leur chapelle tout ce qu'ils purent : ornements, autel, cloche, gonds et serrures. Ils emportèrent aussi, disent la tradition et ma grand'mère, leur chère statue de Notre-Dame. Mais, ô surprise ! dès le lendemain, elle avait d'elle-même repris sa place dans la chapelle dépouillée ! Joie des Français restés au village, ébahissement des Hurons qui croient à une fraude et reviennent en grande hâte chercher leur trésor. Mais la merveille se répète ! Dès l'aube du jour suivant, les quelques fidèles de l'Ancienne-Lorette assemblés pour la messe retrouvent la Vierge sur son socle. On renouvelle l'expérience ; toujours le même résultat. Enfin, de guerre lasse, on laissa la Mère de Dieu faire sa volonté sur la terre comme au ciel !.....

their household gods over to the jagged, resounding banks of the Cabir-Coubat, at the point since then called Jeune Lorette to distinguish it from the other, which became from that fact, Ancienne Lorette The Indians did not fail to take away everything they were able to take from their chapel, ornaments, altar, bell, hinges and locks They also carried away, so tradition and my grandmother say, their dear statue of Our Lady. But, Oh ! what a surprise ! in the morning of the next day, she had resumed her place in the despoiled chapel ! Imagine the joy of the French remaining in the village, and the amazement of the Hurons ! These suspect a fraud, and return in a hurry to get back their treasure. But the miracle is repeated ! At dawn on the following day, a few of the faithful at Ancienne Lorette, assembled for the Mass, find the Madonna again on her pedestal. The experience is again renewed, always the same result. At last tired of the struggle, they let the Madonna do her will on earth as it is in heaven !

Et c'est pourquoi, quand l'église de pierre vint, en 1838, remplacer l'humble chapelle des Hurons, on ménagea en haut du portail une belle niche pour la *Vierge Fidèle*. Au cours du temps un rosier sauvage est apparu au bas de la niche. Il a grandi. Il a vieilli. Il y était encore à la démolition de l'église. Comment a-t-il grimpé là ?. .... Le vent qui balaye les pentes graveleuses du ravin de la petite rivière a-t-il soulevé jusque-là une graine d'églantier ?...Est-ce un oiseau, hirondelle, fauvette ou jaseur du cèdre qui l'y a portée dans son bec mignon en hommage à la Mère du Dieu qui donne la plume au passereau ?...Et Pourquoi pas ?...Savons-nous ce qui se passe sous la huppe des petits chanteurs du Bon Dieu...

Mais ne vous impatientez pas ! J'arrive à l'histoire de ma grand'mère.

C'est par un beau dimanche de fin juillet, en la fête de la Bonne Sainte Anne — il y a bien longtemps !— que les hommes réunis sur le *perron de la messe* remarquèrent au pied de la niche un petit rameau vert qui tremblait à la

And that is why, when in 1838 the new stone Church came to replace the humble Huron Chapel, they built over the door a fine niche for the Faithful Madonna. In the course of time, a wild rosebush appeared at the base of the niche. It grew up ; it grew old. It was still there at the demolition of the building. How did it creep up there ? Did the wind which sweeps the gravelly slopes of the valley of the little river, swirl into the wall just one little seed of sweet-brier ? Did some bird, a swallow, a warbler or a jay, bring a seed in his little beak in tribute to the Queen of Heaven, who gives its plumage the sparrow ? Well, why not ? Do we know what goes on under the crests of the little songsters of the Most High ?

But don't be in a hurry ! I am coming to my grandmother's story.

It was on a beautiful Sunday at the end of July, the feast of Good Saint Anne — how long ago ! that the men gathered at the doorsteps before Mass noticed a little green twig at the foot of the niche, trembling in the breeze,

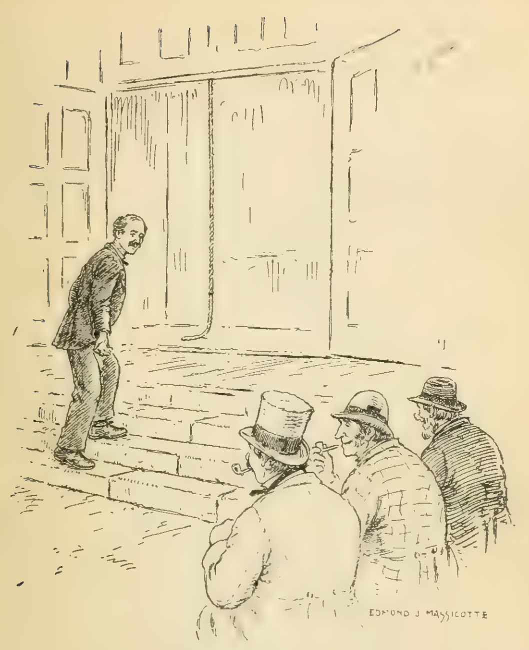
brise et battait gentiment le rebord de la pierre. Le bedeau, en gravissant les marches, fit observer la chose aux trois marguilliiers ': Jean Hamel, Nicolas Bonhomme et Jacques Voyer, qui fumaient, gravement assis sur un banc près de la boîte du crieur public.

— Tiens ! observa plaisamment Nicolas Bonhomme, la Sainte Vierge aime les bouquets, et quand le bedeau oublie d'en mettre sur son autel.........

— A moins, opina Jean Hamel, que ce ne soit un cadeau de sa sainte Mère, la Bonne Sainte Anne !....

— Si les bouquets de l'autel de la Sainte Vierge ne sont pas assez *fiionnés à matin*, rétorqua le bedeau, c'est pas de ma faute ! On les a pris dans ton jardin, Nicolas, et c'est ta fille qui les a *greyés !*...

En éclatant de rire, il empoigna la corde à deux mains. C'était le dernier coup de la messe. Un à un, les hommes entrèrent, puis les jeunes gens, et, au dernier *tinton*, il n'y eut plus



C'est pas de ma faute, rétorqua le bedeau, on les à pris dans ton jardin, Nicolas, et c'est ta fillle qui les a *greyés* !

It is not my fault, replied the beadle, they were gathered in your garden, Nicholas, and it was your daughter that set them as they are.



and scraping gently against the edge of the stone.

The beadle, climbing up the steps, pointed it out to the three churchwardens, Jean Hamel, Nicholas Bonhomme and Jacques Voyer, who were seated, peacefully smoking, on a bench near the public Crier's stand.

" Look ", said Nicholas Bonhomme, jokingly, " The Blessed Virgin loves flowers, and when the beadle forgets to put some on her altar." . . .

" Unless," suggested Jean Hamel, " it may be a gift from her blessed Mother, the good Saint Anne ".

" If the flowerson the Blessed Virgin' saltar" replied the beadle, " are not to her taste this morning, it is not my fault. They were picked in your garden, Nicholas, and it was your daughter that set them out just where they are."

Breaking into a laugh, he grasped the rope with both hands. It was the last bell for Mass. One by one, the men came in, then the young folks, and, at the last stroke there was left at

sur la place, à l'ombre claire des jeunes ormes, qu'une longue rangée de *barouches* et de chevaux attachés aux petits poteaux blancs...

Tel fut dans sa simplicité, et sans service de clerc ni de tabellion, l'acte de naissance du rosier de l'église. Pour un temps, on n'en parla plus.

. . . .

. . . .

Les années passèrent. Rien ne changea à l'Ancienne-Lorette, sinon que les enfants devinrent des hommes, que les vieux s'en allèrent dormir sous terre et que le rosier poussa vigoureusement ses racines dans toutes les fissures de pierre. Moitié rampant, moitié grimpant il atteignit la niche ; quelques rameaux graciles y pénétrèrent, et bientôt entourèrent de leurs bras caressants la Vierge des Hurons qui, souriante, laissa faire, et continua de ses deux doigts levés, à montrer le ciel !

Tous les automnes, le rosier livrait une à une et comme à regret ses folioles jaunies aux vents froids, puis, courageux, faisait tête aux

the front, in the cool shade of the young elms, only a long row of buckboards with horses hitched to the little white posts.

In plainness like this, and without the help of clerk or scribe, such was the coming to birth of the Church rosebush. For a while, nothing more was said of it.

. . . .

. . . .

Years passed by. Nothing changed at Ancienne Lorette, except that the children became men, that the old went to sleep underground, and that the rosebush pushed its roots with all its might into the crannies of the stone. Half creeping, half clinging, it reached the niche; some slender branches entered it, and soon surrounded with their loving arms the Madonna of the Hurons, who, smiling, suffered them to do so, and standing there, with two fingers up-lifted, continued pointing to heaven !

Every fall, the rosebush yielded up its little yellow leaves one by one to the cold winds, then bravely bent its head to the terrible squalls

rafales terribles accourues des Laurentides, fouettait le mur glacé, usait son écorce et ses épines aux aspérités de la pierre....A de certains matins, il endossait une blanche livrée de givre qu'il dépouillait ensuite aux approches de midi. Si le jour devenait un peu tiède, la neige du toit commençait à pleurer et les dégouttures du clocher paraient l'arbuste d'une miraculeuse floraison de cristal où les rayons du soleil venaient s'ébattre dans les sept couleurs de l'arc-en-ciel !

Tous les printemps, le rosier secouait vivement ses glaçons et ressuscitait ; la sève battait la charge dans ses bourgeons qui éclataient sous les premiers effluves chauds et déployaient en tous sens des flots de dentelles vertes cependant qu'en bas, dans la plaine et dans les bois, la vie dormait encore !...Quand juin venait et que tous les oiseaux coutumiers étaient de retour, le rosier faisait ses boutons et, pour le mystère des nids, offrait l'abri de ses petites tonnelles. A la Fête-Dieu, voyant les Lorettains affairés planter des balises le long de la grand'rue, il

rushing down from the Laurentides, whipped the icy wall, and wore down its thorns and bark on the roughnesses of the stone. Sometimes in the morning it put on a white dress of frost, which it put off again at the approach of noon. If the weather grew a little warmer, the snow from the roof began to weep, and the troughs of the steeple dressed the bush with wonderful crystal blossoms, where the sun's rays came to play in all the seven colors of the rainbow !

Every Spring, the rosebush shook off its icicles and woke up again ; the sap sounded the charge in all its buds, which burst under the first stirrings of heat, and spread everywhere in little billows of green lace, although down below on the plain and in the woods, all life was still asleep ! The rosebush burst into bud when June came, and all the birds of passage were coming home, and for the secrecy of their nests, offered the shelter of its little hiding-places. At the Fete-Dieu, seeing the village people setting up evergreens along the roadside, it hoisted its own wreaths of pink satin

arborait de lui-même des rosaces de satin au cœur d'or, hommage de son être parfumé au Maître de la Vie !.....

Un jour cependant on remarqua que la pousée des racines descellait la pierre de la niche et que le mortier tombait par croûtes devant la porte. Derechef, dans le village, on commença à parler du rosier. Les lavandières, en piquant le linge sur les cordes mirent la question à l'ordre du jour.

Entre deux parties de dames, les rentiers la discutèrent et, en fin de compte, opinèrent pour la suppression. Plus sentimentales, la plupart des femmes, mues par ces raisons du cœur que la raison ne connaît point, prirent la défense de l'arbuste. Il leur semblait que la *Vierge Fidèle* en aurait du chagrin et qu'ayant elle-même suscité le rosier de la niche elle saurait bien protéger l'église.

Cette opinion cependant ne prévalut point à l'assemblée de fabrique puisque Pierre Gau-

blooms with the golden heart, as a tribute from its sweet-scented being to the Master of Life !

One day, however, it was seen that the pushing of the roots was loosening the stones of the niche, and that crumbs of mortar were falling in front of the door. Once more they began in the village to talk about the rosebush. The washerwomen, hanging out their linen on the lines, made the question one of the orders of the day.

Between two games of checkers, the land-owners talked it over, and when the vote was taken, it was for doing away with the rosebush. A large number of the women took up the defence of the shrub, being more sentimental, and moved by reasons of the heart which the mind knows nothing about. It seemed to them that the Faithful Madonna would feel sorry, but that having herself planted the rosebush in the niche, she would know very well how to take care of the church.

This opinion, however, did not carry at the meeting of the vestry, since Pierre Gauvin,

vin, maître maçon, fut chargé, moyennant sept chelins et demi, de faire disparaître la cause du mal et de réparer la façade.

Il arriva un matin avec son apprenti pour commencer le travail. Les gens de la messe sortaient : vieilles en mantelet noir et coiffées d'une tartine crêpée, vieux courbés sur leur canne, jeunes filles riantes sous des chapeaux à fleurs. Une grande tristesse descendit sur tous ces visages à la vue du maçon qui malaxait son mortier. On s'arrêta pour voir.

Pierre Gauvin aidé de son apprenti, avait appuyé sa longue échelle et il montait maintenant, son oiseau sur l'épaule, une fiche de fer entre les dents. La silhouette blanche de l'homme éclatait sous le soleil de sept heures ; le fronton de pierre de la porte centrale, les pleins cintres des fenêtres anciennes, tout riait dans la lumière ; une forte brise agitait le rosier, le faisait frémir et chanter. La Vierge, elle, semblait regarder de ses yeux immobiles la suite des maisonnettes, la rue ensablée et montante, les bouquets sombres des bois de sapins et les

master mason, was hired, at a cost of seven shillings and sixpence, to do away with the cause of the trouble and to repair the church front.

He came there one morning with his helper to begin the work. The people were coming out from Mass ; old women in black jackets and goffered caps, old men leaning on their canes, young girls smiling under their flower-trimmed hats. A great sadnes sfell on all these faces on seeing the mason there, slacking his mortar. They stayed to watch.

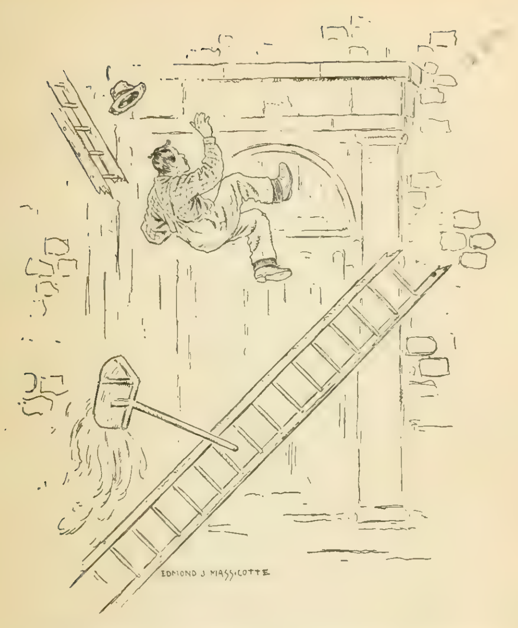
Pierre Gauvin, with the help of his apprentice, had set up his long ladder, and was now climbing it, with his hod on his shoulder, and an iron hook between his teeth. The man's white outline stood out under the seven o'clock sun : the stone pediment of the central doorway, the full arches of the old windows, everything, indeed, was laughing in the sunshine, a good breeze was swaying the rosebush, making it wave and sing. The Madonna, herself, seemed to be looking with fixed gaze at the row of cottages, the sandy rising road, the dark

toitures rouges des granges semées sur les coteaux, toute la belle campagne qui se creusait en val, à ses pieds . . .

Le maçon avait dépassé la première corniche ; on le vit s'encadrer dans la mosaïque de la rosace. Encore quelques barreaux et il va atteindre la niche ! . . . On entend alors un craquement sec, puis un cri, parti de vingt poitrines ! L'échelle venait de se casser par le milieu et le ronçon supérieur, pivotant autour du point de rupture, précipitait sur le gravier de la place l'homme et sa charge.

On releva le malheureux. Il avait une jambe cassée et de fortes contusions à la tête. Il fut deux longs mois au lit. Quand il sortit pour la première fois, il vit le rosier, mis en liesse par une fine brise du sud, qui le narguait de toutes ses fleurs et mettait une cocarde éclatante au front de pierre de la vieille église. Pierre Gauvin, impressionné, persuada les marguilliers de renoncer à l'ouvrage.

. . . .



L'échelle venait de se casser par le milieu....

The ladder had just broken at the middle....



clumps of balsam trees, the red roofs of the barns scattered over the hills, and all that beautiful country which spread over the valley at her feet.

The mason had passed the first cornice, he seemed framed in the pattern of the rosebush. Only a few rungs and he would reach the niche. Then a dry crackling was heard, and a cry, coming from twenty throats ! The ladder had just broken at the middle, and the upper part, swerving round the breaking-point, hurled the man and his load down upon the gravel of the walk.

They lifted up the unfortunate man. He had a leg broken and bad bruises on his head. He spent two long months in bed. When he went out for the first time, he saw the rosebush rejoicing in the fine southern breeze, and mocking him with all its flowers, which decked the stone front of the old church with a flaming cockade. Pierre Gauvin, feeling uneasy, got the church-wardens to cancel his contract.

. . . .

Et la Vierge des Hurons, de ses deux doigts levés, continua à montrer le ciel ! . . .

. . . .

Le curé mourut ; les marguilliers, Pierre Gauvin aussi. Les jeunes gens d'alors, devenus vieux, gardèrent le souvenir de l'aventure du maçon, mais la nouvelle génération n'y croyait plus guère. La pluie succédant au soleil et la neige à la pluie, il arriva que, de plus en plus, les pierre qui formaient la base de la niche firent saillie et menacèrent de s'écrouler.

Le conseil de fabrique s'émut. Comme vingt ans plus tôt, et dans le même coin de la sacristie, le vieux rosier de la Vierge fut encore condamné et l'on chargea cette fois de l'exécution, le bedeau de la praroisse.

Nazaire Savard, le bedeau, solide gaillard dans la quarantaine, avait fait les cent coups dans les chantiers du Saint-Maurice. Fatigué de la hache et de la *drave*, il s'était marié aux Trois-Rivières et s'en était venu finir ses jours — au sec et au chaud — dans la sacristie de

And the Madonna of the Huron's standing there, with two fingers up-lifted, continued pointing to heaven.

. . . .

The Curé died, and the church-wardens, also Pierre Gauvin.

The young folks of that time, having grown old, kept the mason's mishap in their minds, but the new generation hardly believed in it any longer. Rain followed sunshine, and snow, and rain, and it came about that the stones forming the base of the niche stood out more and more, and threatened to fall down.

The council of the church corporation became excited. As it had been before, and in the same corner of the vestry, the old rosebush was again condemned, and this time its execution was committed to the beadle of the parish.

Nazaire Savard, the beadle, a sturdy chap in his forties, had done his hundred strokes in the Saint Maurice lumber camps. Tired of the axe and the drive he had married at Three Rivers and had come away to end his days,

l'Ancienne-Lorette. Il habitait maintenant une maison de bois en face de l'église, et, devant sa porte, sept ou huit petits Savard, tous *insécrables* comme leur père, se roulaient dans la poussière.

La jupe noire que les bedeaux de ce temps-là nouaient à la ceinture par un cordon blanc ne lui allait guère !... Le beau surplis des fêtes n'arrivait pas non plus à épouser les courbes rares de son large dos. Alain le forgeron disait couramment que le sacristain avait l'air d'un gibier de potence qui aurait cassé sa corde — une allure pour le moins inconvenante pour un homme qui est presque dans le clergé ! ....Il maniait l'éteignoir comme une gaffe et sa génuflexion manquait vraiment de grâce et de souplesse. Le dimanche, quand Savard, bien empesé, traversait la nef en longueur pour aller sonner le Sanctus, les Lorettains distraits, croyaient voir un *cageux* qui flottait des *billots* ou marchait sur une estacade !....

Il n'était pas méchant, mais avec ses relents de *cambuse* et d'admirables muscles, il avait



On aurait dit qu'il flottait des billots ou marchait sur une estacade!....

The villagers thought they were looking at a raftsman floating logs, or walking along a boom.



through wet and dry, in the sacristy of Ancienne Lorette. He now lived in a wooden house facing the church, and seven or eight little Savards, all toughs like their father, used to roll about in the dust in front of his door.

The black skirt which the beadles of that day used to knot round their waist with a white cord, hardly suited this fellow. Neither did the fine surplice for feast days, quite adapt itself to the rare curves of his broad back. Alain the blacksmith used often to say that the beadle looked like a gallows-bird that had broken his rope; this was, to say the least, not a nice way of speaking of a man who was almost among the clergy! He handled the extinguisher like a boat-hook, and his manner of kneeling was certainly lacking in ease and grace. On Sunday, when Savard, very well starched up, walked the whole length of the nave to ring the Sanctus, the absent-minded villagers thought they were looking at a raftsman floating logs, or walking along a boom.

He was not a bad man, but, along with his frowsiness and his iron muscles, he had

gardé de son ancienne vie une faconde intarissable et un *discours* frondeur qui lui faisaient des ennemis dans la paroisse. C'est que l'Ancienne-Lorette est un pays de lavandières ! Les langues y sont d'une agilité extrême et les bonnes femmes tout en blanchissant les chemises des bourgeois de Québec ne manquent pas de noircir la réputation de leur prochain !..........La concurrence de Savard semblait à beaucoup de ces dames tout à fait insupportable ! Aussi, malgré les innombrables drapeaux blancs arborés chaque matin sur les cordes à linge, la paix était-elle loin de régner entre la cuvette et l'éteignoir, et les commères, d'ailleurs fort divisées, se rencontraient toutes sur le dos de Nazaire Savard.

Le soir donc de ce dimanche, le bedeau veilla chez Mathias Gauvin, le fils *à défunt Pierre*. Sur la *galerie* remplie de monde, on causa de tout, du temps, du sermon de monsieur le Curé, du prix du foin et des framboises, des morts de la semaine, des baptêmes et surtout du rosier ! Mathias raconta l'aventure arri-

retained from his old trade an untiring talkativeness and a habit of grumbling which made him enemies in the parish. The fact is, Old Lorette is a village of washerwomen! Their tongues have great agility, and the good women, while whitening the linen of their Quebec patrons, never fail to blacken their neighbors' reputations. Savard's proximity seemed to many of these women quite insupportable ! Besides, in spite of the innumerable white flags hung out every morning on the clotheslines, peace was very far from reigning between the washtub and the extinguisher, and the gossips, very much divided on other questions, all united in jumping on the back of Nazaire Savard. Well, the beadle was spending this Sunday evening with Mathias Gauvin, son of the late Pierre. The verandah was full of people ; they were talking about everything, the weather, the Curé's sermon, the price of hay and raspberries, the deaths and baptisms during the week, and especially about the rosebush ! Mathias told of the accident which had happened

ver à son père vingt ans auparavant et dont il avait été le témoin oculaire.

— Et il a été trop *cheniqueux* pour remonter, ton père ?.... demanda insolemment Savard.... Moi ! ça ne m'aurait pas empêché !

— J'ai toujours cru que la Sainte Vierge ne voulait pas, répondit Mathias. Mon défunt père a grimpé sur l'église bien des fois avant et après cette journée-là, et il ne lui est jamais rien arrivé. Fais attention, Savard !....Faut pas jouer avec ces affaires-là !...

— Je voudrais bien voir celui qui m'empêcherait d'ébrancher les murs de mon église !... Quand on a grimpé dans le fin bout des pins de la rivière Galeuse, les enfants, quand on a voyagé sur les *cages* pendant vingt ans, *en faut* plus que ça pour nous faire peur !...

— Fais comme tu voudras, mais moi, je laisserais la Sainte Vierge avoir soin de son église !

— Je vous invite *toutes* à venir voir ça demain soir ! Si vous voulez des *retiges* du rosier,

to his father twenty years before, and of which he had been an eye-witness.

" And he was too much of a coward to go up again ?" rudely questioned Savard. " Pooh, that would not have hindered me "

" I have always believed that the Blessed Virgin did not want it " replied Mathias. "My late father has many a time climbed up the church walls, both before and after that day, and nothing ever happened to him. Now, you listen, Savard ! Better not play with things like that !"

" I should like to see who would prevent me from pruning on the walls of my church. When as children we climbed to the very top of the pines on the Galeuse river, and when we have traveled on rafts for twenty years, it takes more than that to make us afraid ! "

" Do as you like, but as for me, I would let the Blessed Virgin take care of her own Church ! "

" I invite you all to come and see that to-morrow evening ! If you want any sprigs

on vous en donnera !...

La curiosité, décidément piquée, amena le lendemain soir tout le village de l'Ancienne-Lorette sur le perron de l'église. On y voyait les Hamel, vieux et jeunes, le père François Kirouac et ses garçons qui n'avaient qu'à traverser le champ et à passer le tourniquet, les Robitaille du moulin, les Blondeau, les Gauvin, les Pageot, le père Huot, maître d'école, et jusqu'au docteur Laurin, des Saules, qui, revenant d'une visite aux malades dans les Grands-Déserts, attacha son cheval à un poteau, et attendit dans sa voiture.

A six heures, Savard sortit de la maison pour sonner l'Angélus. Comme on le regardait il affecta plus de pose que d'habitude, fit montre de ses muscles !... Puis il sortit un gro-rouleau de corde de dessous l'escalier du jubé. Personne ne s'offrait pour l'aider. L'histoire de Pierre Gauvin s'était répétée de bouche en bouche et nul ne semblait disposé à se risquer à cette besogne. D'ailleurs, les Lorettains aimaient leur vieux rosier qui partageait leur vie depuis

from the rosebush, you can have them "

Curiosity, very much excited, brought the whole village of Ancienne Lorette the next evening over to the front of the church. The Hamels, old and young, were there, the father François Kirouac and his boys, who had only to cross the field and go through the turnstile. The Robitailles from the mill, were there, the Blondeaus, the Gauvins, Huot, the schoolmaster, and even Doctor Laurin from des Saules, who on his way back from a sick visit to Grand-Deserts, hitched his horse to a post, and waited in his buggy.

At six o'clock, Savard came out of his house to ring the Angelus. As so many were looking at him, he put on more style than usual, showed up more muscle ! Then he brought out a big coil of rope from under the stairway of the lobby. No one offered to help him. The story of Pierre Gauvin passed from mouth to mouth, and no one seemed to want to take any risk in the business. Besides, the Villagers loved their old rosebush, which had always been

toujours, s'était identifié avec leurs dimanches et dont si souvent les pétales sanglants avaient chu en tournoyant sur le linge blanc des baptêmes et le drap noir des cercueils. A le voir ainsi disparaître, les plus indifférents s'émouvaient et pour les anciens c'était une amputation, une tristesse ajoutée, encore un lambeau du cher passé qui s'en allait.

Au bout d'un instant la tête carrée de Savard parut dans la fenêtre du clocher et la corde se déroula sur la façade.

— Elle ne cassera pas, celle-là, cria-t-il en ricanant à Mathias Gauvin qui fumait, appuyé sur la clôture du presbytère. Puis, bravache, les manches retroussées pour corser son effet, il empoigna la corde, se suspendit dans le vide, glissant lentement jusqu'à ce que son pied atteignît le demi-nœud préparé d'avance pour le soutenir. Il se trouvait à ce moment presque face à face avec la Madone des Hurons. Malgré l'heure, le vent n'était pas encore tombé et le rosier tremblait de toutes ses feuilles. Quelques hirondelles dérangées dans leur retraite,

a part of their life, was identified with their Sundays, and whose ruddy petals used to fall on the white linen of the christenings, and on the black cloth of the funerals. To see it disappear in this way, the most careless were affected, and for the old people it was an added sorrow, like an amputation, another fragment of the dear past, which was vanishing away.

Another moment, and Savard's square head appeared in the window of the steeple, and the rope rolled down the front. . .

" That rope isn't going to break " he grinned to wards Mathias Gauvin, who was smoking, leaning against the presbytery fence. Then, swaggering, with his sleeves rolled up to heighten the effect he grasped the rope, and swung out, gliding slowly until his foot caught the half-knot tied beforehand to hold him up. At this moment he found himself face to face with the Madonna of the Hurons. Notwithstanding the hour, the wind had not yet fallen, and the rose bush was trembling in all its leaves. Some

volaient, décrivant des courbes affolées au-dessus des spectateurs.

Cette fois, c'en est bien fini du pauvre arbuste dont toute la vie n'a été qu'hommage discret, longue caresse et délicat parfum ; il semble bien que la Vierge l'abandonne à l'inévitable !... Savard se retourne pour faire aux spectateurs un salut ironique... Un couteau brille dans sa main libre !... Il va frapper !... Mais la Vierge n'a pas dit son dernier mot ! Attendez ! Le bras qui menaçait reste levé : un cri perçant parti de la rue, est monté dans le silence :

— Au feu !...

Tous les yeux se détournent et voient avec horreur d'épaisses torsades de fumée noire sortir obliquement des fenêtres de la maison du bedeau, puis un jet de flamme aigu crever la couverture et s'élancer vers le ciel !...

Savard s'est laissé choir le long de la corde. Un instant il reste là, stupide, puis il s'élance à travers les villageois atterrés et se rue dans la maison. Déjà sa femme l'y a précédé et au

swallows, disturbed in their retreat, were flying in frightened curves over the heads of the spectators.

This time, there was going to be an end to the poor little shrub, whose whole life had been silent homage, and the long caress of its delicate perfume. It seemed that the Madonna was giving it over to the inevitable ! Savard turns round to wave an ironic salute to the spectators. A knife glitters in his free hand. He is going to strike ! But the Virgin has not spoken her last word ! Look ! the threatening arm stays raised ; a shrill cry comes from the road, comes through the silence :

" Fire ! Fire ! !"

Every eye turns and sees with horror thick clouds of black smoke rising obliquely from the windows of the beadle's house, then a sharp tongue of flame pierces the roof and shoots towards the sky !

Savard lets himself slide quickly down the rope. One moment he stands, stunned, then hurls himself past the astonished villagers and

bout d'une demi-minute on la voit paraître avec un bébé dans les bras et s'affaisser au milieu des spectateurs.

Que faire pour parer au désastre ?. . . Trop bien nourrie la flamme, déjà maîtresse, se moque des quelques seaux d'eau qu'on lui jette. . . pour faire quelque chose. . .Au bout d'une heure, il ne restait de la maison du bedeau qu'un amas de cendres fumantes !

En haut, dans sa niche, la Vierge des Hurons, les deux doigts levés, montrait toujours le ciel.

. . . .

L'émoi fut grand à Lorette. De partout on avait vu la lueur et le lendemain, de Sainte-Foy à Valcartier et de Charlesbourtg à la Pointe-aux-Trembles, on connaissait la pénible leçon infligée au pauvre Savard.

Depuis ce temps, personne n'a osé toucher au protégé de Marie. De plus en plus, il a travaillé, bousculé la pierre du portail ; il a couru

rushes into his house. His wife has already gone in before him, and a half minute afterwards, she is seen appearing with a baby in her arms, and then falls down fainting in the midst of the spectators. What can be done to check the disaster ? The flames, too well fed, are already masters, and laugh at the few pails of water thrown on them. . . an attempt to do something. . . At the end of an hour, all that was left of the beadle's house was a heap of smoking ashes !

High in her niche, stood the Madonna of the Hurons, with two fingers uplifted, always pointing to heaven.

. . . .

Great was the excitement at Lorette. From everywhere the light of the flames had been seen, and the next day, from Saint Foy to Valcartier and from Charlesburg to Pointe-aux-Trembles, everyone knew of the painful lesson taught to poor Savard.

Since that day, no one has dared to touch what Mary protects. More and more it has

sur la corniche et s'est étendu comme une vigne. Il y a quelques années — en 1907 pour ceux qui aiment les dates — les paroissiens de l'Ancienne-Lorette voulant élever à Dieu un temple magnifique durent démolir leur vieille église. Il faut croire que le rosier avait accompli le nombre de ses jours, car tout se passa sans incident. Et aujourd'hui, en vertu de ce privilège qu'ont les végétaux de se survivre indéfiniment par le bouturage, le rosier de la Madone, multiplié à l'infini, embaume tous les parterres lorettains.

Et j'incline à croire que, d'avoir plus d'un demi-siècle durant, vécu si près du ciel du Bon Dieu, d'avoir baigné dans la lumière du sourire de la Vierge, d'avoir écouté tant d'Angélus, ses rejetons ont gardé quelque chose de religieux et de consacré ! J'imagine qu'au fond des corolles de satin rose, les petits cœurs d'or disent encore leur prière mariale, leur mignonne et subtile prière de fleur !. . . .Enfin, je suis certain qu'elles ne sont jamais plus heureuses, les roses du vieux rosier, que les matins où la main pieuse d'une

unsettled the stones of the church front, it has overrun the cornice, and spread out like a vine. Some years ago, in 1907, for those who must have dates, the parishioners of Ancienne Lorette, wishing to raise a magnificent temple to the glory of God, had to pull down their old church. We must believe that the rosebush had accomplished the number of its days, for everything passed off without any incident. And today, by virtue of the privilege which plants have of surviving indefinitely by the cutting of slips, the Madonna's rosebush, infinitely multiplied, is now perfuming all the gardens of Ancienne Lorette.

And I am inclined to believe that, having for more than half a century lived so close to the heaven of the God of all goodness, having bathed in the light of the Virgin's smile, having listened so often to the Angelus, the slips of the Virgin's rosebush have kept some element of religion, some remainder of consecration !

I imagine that in the depth of that corolla of pink satin the little golden hearts are still

fillette vient les cueillir pour les porter dans le coin retiré de l'église, où, dans l'ombre, la Vierge des Hurons, de ses deux doigts levés, montre toujours le ciel !



breathing out their prayer to the Virgin Mary, the soft sweet prayer of the scented briar!

At any rate, I am certain that the roses of the old sweet briar are never happier than when the pious hand of a little girl comes to gather them, to bring them to that quiet corner of the church where, in the shadow, stands the Madonna of the Hurons, with two fingers up-lifted, pointing forever to heaven!



The Chopping Bee



The road leaving Quebec which winds between hawthorn hedges towards Petite Riviere and Ancienne Lorette, crosses a country as old as the French Pioneer's axe in America.

It has kept from the beginning, an air of rustic nobility, with vast historic farms, where riches are hereditary and constant, and it has quiet hamlets at the crossroads, which retain deliciously endearing old French names.

LA CORVÉE DES HAMEL

THE CHOPPING BEE



FRENCH-AND-ENGLISH EDITION

— of —

RÉCITS LAURENTIENS

LAURENTIAN STORIES

La corvée des Hamel

The Chopping Bee

The French by B. M. Victorin

with the translation by JAMES FERRES

MONTREAL

1922

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

The translator deems it a privilege to place before his fellow-Canadians and others an English version of the series of short stories by B. M. Victorin, and, in order that the charm and beauty of the works of this author may be more fully appreciated, the original and the translation are presented on opposite pages in the same volume.

It is a new departure to offer stories in this form, but it is hoped that the reading may prove an easy and pleasant way of acquiring a better knowledge of " the other " language.

Negotiations are progressing favorably for the adoption of this series as text-books in certain of the Schools.

It is the translator's hope that these little volumes may also be found useful to the general public, as the advantage of a practical knowledge of " the other " language is universally recognized.

Any medium which will tend to promote a more intimate knowledge of the literature and the mental attitude of our French-speaking fellow-citizens, seems worthy of welcome, because, with better acquaintance, a closer sympathy, a more fully cordial entente is always possible, no matter how friendly may be the relations between the two great sections of our people.

The translator has in some cases found it advisable to deviate from the strict letter of the text, in order to conform his work with the idiom and usage of worthy writers

of English. These variations include an occasional use of adverbs for adjectives, and change in the tense of verbs, but he hopes that his version will be approved as a closely correct rendering, although necessarily lacking in that delicacy and indefinable charm which is inherent in the work of B. M. Victorin.

The author of " Recits Laurentiens " was born in the Province of Quebec, and still has his home here, His own heart and mind are an index to the heart and mind of his people, and his works in literature and science, which have gained for him much prestige in his own Province, must assuredly secure for him a large measure of distinction elsewhere.

These stories, as a rule, are based on actual occurrences, with which he had close relation.

" Ne vends Pas la Terre " " The Old Farm Not For Sale."

It was the father of his friend and colleague, who refused the temptation of a large sum of money offered for the homestead which had been in the possession of the family for more than two hundred years.

" La Croix de Saint Norbert ". " The Wayside Cross."

It was his great-grand-father who, as the first pioneer to set foot in the forest near Saint Norbert, erected a Cross on the day of his arrival. Its successor, plain and weather-worn, still stands by the wayside.

" La Corvée des Hamel." " The Chopping Bee."

It was his grand-uncle whose heart was broken by his being obliged to cut down his beautiful ancestral elm.

" Le Rosier de la Vierge." " The Madonna's Rosebush."

His grandmother related to him, as a child, the story of the Madonna's wonderful rosebush.

" Sur le Renchaussage." " Farming on the Embankment."

It is his own picture which he draws as the little boy-farmer of the embankment, whose spare time was given to trout-fishing, berry-picking, pranks and picnics.

" Charles Roux." *" Charles Roux."*

It was his own adventure which brought him into friendship with the pathetically mis-understood Charles Roux.

"Jacques Maillé." *"The Northern Colonist."*

It is his own genius which has conceived, and spread upon enduring canvas for our interest, yes, and for our tears, the affecting story of the " Northern Colonists ", with their donation of two hundred loads of fire wood (a fact) to the poor of Montreal.

The scenes of his stories are laid in that demesne which lies in the happy midway between poverty and riches; in a land throbbing with steady, honest toil and homely joys, and marked by devotion to its Church. These scenes surround his own home, and the homes of his relatives, and the readers of the original will surely admit that he views them with the eye of an artist, and describes them with a poet's pen.

The translator feels that, however imperfect his own work may be, if it serves to bring the attention of lovers of true literature to the little master-pieces produced on our own soil by B. M. Victorin, it will by no means have been done in vain.

JAMES FERRES

131 Stanley St.,

Montreal. November 1922

La Corvée des Hamel



Le chemin qui, sortant de Québec, file entre les haies d'aubépine vers la Petite-Rivière et l'Ancienne-Lorette traverse une campagne vieille comme la cognée française en Amérique. De cette origine elle garde un air de noblesse rurale, de vastes fermes historiques où la richesse est héréditaire et normale, avec, à la croisée des chemins, des hameaux tranquilles qui vous ont de vieux noms français délicieux, attendrissants !



THE road leaving Quebec which winds between hawthorn hedges towards Petite Riviere and Ancienne Lorette, crosses a country as old as the French Pioneer's axe in America.

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Tout près, la rivière Saint-Charles, exsangue, bordée de cerisiers à grappe, de sureaux et d'asters blancs, coule à petits bouillons sur ses cailloux polis. Les deux routes, celle du Nord et celle du Sud, l'enjambent tour à tour et d'une seule arche sur de petits ponts de bois d'un archaïsme charmant. Derrière les feuillages, on devine plutôt qu'on ne voit des maisons retirées et d'antiques moulins bâtis au temps des Français. Voici le hameau des Saules, carrefour de rivières et de routes où, tout le jour, devant la boutique du maréchal-ferrant défilent, au pas, les *voyages* de foin descendant de l'Ormière.

Tournez à gauche et prenez vers l'Ancienne-Lorette. Le paysage s'agrandit. D'un côté, l'église de Sainte-Foy s'agenouille à flanc de coteau et vers le nord, sur les premières pentes des Laurentides, comme des bijoux d'argent sur un écrin vert, les clochers des deux Lorettes brillent dans la montée des arbres innombrables.

Le chemin va tout droit entre de vieux saules et de grandes maisons dérobées derrière

Near at hand, the River Saint Charles, bordered with choke-cherries, alders and white asters, rolls languidly with little bubbles over its smooth stones. Two roads, North and South span it by turns, and with a single arch, on charming little old-fashioned bridges Through the foliage, one guesses at, rather than sees, secluded houses and ancient mills built under the French regime. Here is the Saules hamlet, where crossroads meet near the river, and where loads of hay, coming down from de L'Ormiere, pass in slow procession all day long, in front of the smithy.

Turn to the left, and take the road towards Ancient Lorette. The landscape opens out. On one side, the Saint Foy Church nestles at the side of a hill, and, towards the North, on the first slopes of the Laurentides, like silver jewels on a green casket, the steeples of the two Lorettes glitter amid the rising sweep of innumerable trees.

The road leads straight along between two old willows, and large houses half hidden behind

un joli parterre et une haie d'aubépine. Arrêtez ! Voici à cent pas vers la droite la maison des Hamel. On l'appelle comme ça par ici. Elle est petite et nue ; des planches pourries, clouées de travers, condamnent la porte et les fenêtres. Il n'y a pas d'arbres alentour. Les herbes dures, maîtresses de l'avenue, cachent les ornières. L'oseille sauvage et les verges d'or ont envahi le jardin devant la porte, et seuls, rappelant des cultures anciennes, de vieux rosiers, bardés d'épines, fleurissent encore près du ponceau vermoulu et de la barrière en ruine. Mais il y a là, tout près, attirant forcément l'attention, et émergeant encore de la végétation folle qui monte autour d'elle, une souche colossale d'où, comme de noirs serpents, d'énormes racines descendent, rampent sur le talus, traversent le fossé et disparaissent sous le macadam du chemin.

C'est, hélas ! tout ce qui reste de l'orme des Hamel.

a neat lawn and a hawthorn hedge. Stay ! a hundred paces to the right is the Hamel homestead. That is what they call it here. It is small and bare, decaying boards, nailed across, close up the door and windows. There are no trees near it. Stiff weeds, mistresses of the avenue, hide the wheeltracks. Wild sorrel and goldenrod have overrun the garden before the door, some old rosebushes, only, bristling with thorns and recalling the former cultivation, still flourish beside the worm-eaten bridge over the ditch and the broken-down gate. But there is a colossal stump there, which forcibly attracts attention, standing out amid the lush vegetation which climbs over it, and from which, like black snakes, enormous roots spread, creeping over the declivity, crossing the ditch and disappearing under the macadam of the road.

That, alas ! is all that remains of the Hamel elmtree.

* * *

Le dernier habitant de cette maison fut le défunt Siméon Hamel, mon grand oncle, que j'ai bien connu ! La mort lui avait pris tous ses enfants et il vivait sur le *bien*, seul avec Marie, sa femme, une bonne vieille qui avait un fin petit visage plissé et qui nous laissait sans bougonner grappiller dans ses cerisiers.

Quelle famille, mes amis, que ces Hamel ! Il y avait chez grand'mère une extraordinaire photographie, et nous autres, les enfants, quand on nous emmenait le dimanche souper à Lorette, nous passions de longues minutes, un doigt dans la bouche et silencieux, à regarder dans le cadre ces dix-neuf frères et sœurs, tous vieux à barbe et vieilles à *capine*, et dont le plus jeune,— c'était défunt mon grand-oncle — avait alors passé cinquante ans !

Et c'est là qu'ils étaient tous nés dans la petite maison grise qui n'avait en avant qu'une porte et deux fenêtres et autour de laquelle courait un bon renchaussage retenu par des

* * *

The last occupant of this house was the late Simeon Hamel, my granduncle, whom I used to know well. Death had bereaved him of all his children, and he lived alone on the property with his wife Marie, a dear old lady with a fine little wrinkled face, who never made any objection when we went picking cherries from her trees.

What a family, my friends, were these Hamels ! At my Grandmother's there was an extraordinary photograph, and we children, when taken to Lorette for supper on Sunday, used to spend long minutes, silently, and with finger in mouth, looking at these nineteen brothers and sisters in the frame, the former with beards and the latter wearing linen caps, and the youngest of them, my late granduncle, was then over fifty years old !

And that is where they were all born, in that little grey house, which had only the door and two windows in front, and around which ran a good banking of earth, held in place by

poutres de cèdre. La terre descendait en pente douce vers Sainte-Foy, jusque dans " la Suète ", belle terre, ma foi, encore assez féconde après trois siècles de culture pour nourrir cette formidable lignée.

On connaissait le *bien* des Hamel de dix paroisses à la ronde, à cause de l'orme gigantesque planté au bord de la route, l'orme bien des fois centenaire, plus vieux que l'histoire, aussi solidement établi dans la légende que dans la terre. Il était gros quand l'homme blanc parut aux rives du Saint-Laurent et les sauvages le disaient habité par un puissant manitou. Durant cent cinquante ans, sur le chemin du Roy qui poudroyait à ses pieds, il avait vu passer les beaux soldats de France et l'on racontait qu'à son ombre le marquis de Montcalm avait fait reposer plus d'une fois ses vaillants grenadiers. Il y a quelque trente ans, on voyait encore de la *galerie* de mon grand-oncle deux autres arbres semblables, l'un sur les hauteurs de Sainte-Foy, l'autre vers Lorette-des-Indiens, et, chose curieuse que grand'mère m'a souvent

cedar timbers. The farm sloped gently towards Saint Foy, down into "La Suete", a beautiful farm, upon my word, and even yet, after three centuries of cultivation, fertile enough to support this formidable brood.

The Hamel property was known through ten parishes roundabout, because of the gigantic elm growing beside the road, an elm many times a centenarian, older than history, as solidly established in legend as in the ground. It was well-grown when the white man first appeared on the banks of the Saint Lawrence, and the Indians used to say it was dwelt in by a powerful manitou. For a hundred and fifty years it had seen the gallant soldiers of France pass by on the King's Road, which dustily wound past its foot, and there is a legend that the Marquis of Montcalm more than once let his valiant grenadiers rest under its shade. Some thirty years ago, two other trees very like it were still to be seen from my granduncle's verandah, one on the heights of St. Foy, the other towards Indian Lorette, and my grand-

affirmée quand je lui tenais l'écheveau, ces ormes appartenaient à des Hamel n'ayant entre eux et avec nous aucun lien de parenté.

L'orme de l'oncle Siméon avait trente-six pieds de tour à hauteur d'homme. Oui, trente-six pieds, bien mesurés à la corde ! Le dimanche, quand nous étions chez grand-père, à quelques arpents de là, nous coupions à travers l'avoine pour venir entourer le géant de la couronne de nos petits bras. Et je pense aujourd'hui à la scène délicieuse que cela faisait, à ces ardents papillons d'un jour que sont les enfants, posés pour un instant sur le pied noir du vieil arbre, à ces cris, à ces rires qui fusaient vers la cime et s'harmonisaient avec le babil des oiseaux sur le seuil des nids innombrables !

Ah ! l'orme des Hamel ! L'oncle Siméon pouvait labourer loin de l'autre côté du chemin sans quitter son ombre, et souvent aussi, le soc plantait tout droit et l'attelage s'arrêtait court : la charrue venait de toucher une racine ! Siméon regardait alors avec orgueil pen-

mother used often to tell me a curious thing while I was holding her skein of wool, which was that those two elms also belonged to Hamels, but who were not related either to each other or to us.

Uncle Simeon's elmtree was, at a man's height, thirty-six feet in circumference. Yes, thirty-six feet, by actual measurement with a cord! On Sundays, when we used to go to my grandfather's, at a point some acres distant, we would cut across the oat-field, to come and try to encircle the crown giant with our little arms. I think today of the delightful scene which that used to make, of those ardent ephemeral butterflies which children are, of the shrieks of laughter which went mingling towards the top, and harmonized with the twittering of the birds on the edges of innumerable nests!

Oh! the Hamel elmtree! Uncle Simeon might be working far on the other side of the road without leaving its shade, often, too, the plowshare would stick, and the team stop short, the plow had just struck a root! Simeon would

dant un instant l'arbre superbe ; puis, passant les guides à son cou et assujettissant sa pipe entre ses dents, il tirait dur sur les *manchons*, commandait les chevaux et continuait le sillon commencé.

L'orme des Hamel ! Je l'ai vu bien des fois et sous toutes les lumières. Je l'ai vu quand le printemps commençait à peine à tisser la gaze légère des jeunes feuilles, sans masquer encore la musculature puissante des grosses branches. Je l'ai vu aux petites heures, sensible à la prime caresse du soleil, accueillir avec un profond murmure la fine brise du matin. Mais c'est surtout le soir, quand nous redescendions vers Québec, qu'il était beau. Je manquais de mots alors, mais les images sont là, très nettes, dans ma mémoire. La lumière horizontale retouchait la forte tête et charpentait d'or bruni le baldaquin immense royalement dressé dans le ciel apâli. Puis, avec la retombée du soleil, les verts se fonçaient, des trous noirs se creusaient dans la masse lumineuse, et peu à peu, à mesure que l'ombre montait derrière, le

then look proudly for a moment at the superb tree, then passing the reins round his neck and adjusting his pipe between his teeth, would pull hard at the handles, drive the horses on and continue the furrow he had begun.

The Hamel elmtree ! I have seen it many times and under every light. I have seen it when the Spring was just beginning to weave the fragile gauze of the green leaves, without yet disguising the powerful sinews of the great branches. I have seen it in the early hours, responsive to the first kiss of the sun, greet with a deep murmur the fine morning breeze. But above all, it was in the evening when we were going back towards Quebec, that it was beautiful. I could then find no words, but the images are there, most clearly, in my memory. The horizontal light was retouching its noble crown, and glossing with burnished gold the immense canopy so royally outlined against the paling sky. Then, with the further decline of the sun, the greens were shaded, dark spaces deepened in the luminous mass, and, little by

charme s'éteignait doucement ! Vers l'heure où notre voiture passait au pas sur le pont Radeau, l'orme des Hamel se fondait dans la grande nuit.

Or, un soir que, après souper, Siméon, assis sur le bord de son renchaussage, fumait silencieusement sa pipe en regardant la buée violette s'élever au fond de " la Suète ", il vit son voisin Charles Paradis, ouvrir la barrière et remonter l'allée.

— Bonsoir Charles !

— Bonsoir, Siméon ! Ça va, les labours ?

— Oui. Mes deux grandes pièces sont faites. Demain je fais la terre noire.

Le silence tomba entre les deux hommes. Charles était dans la quarantaine, grand, un peu voûté, gris aux tempes. Il fumait, debout, les mains passées sous les bretelles de cuir.

— Siméon, dit enfin Charles, j'ai à te parler. Tu sais que ton orme est vieux et pourri. La

little, while the shadows climbed up behind it, the charm slowly melted away ! Towards the time when our waggon slowly passed over the Radeau bridge, the Hamel elm was swallowed up in the great darkness.

There came an evening when Simeon, seated after supper at the edge of the embankment surrounding the foundations of his house, was silently smoking his pipe, and watching the purple mist rising from the foot of " La Suete ". He saw his neighbor Charles Paradis open the gate and come up the lane.

" Good evening, Charles."

" Good evening, Simeon ! Work going along all right ?".

" Yes. My two large fields are done. Tomorrow I am doing the black loam."

Silence fell between the two men. Charles was in his forties, stooped slightly, turning grey. He was standing smoking, with his hands passed through his leather braces. " Simeon ", said Charles at last, " I have something to say to you. You know your elm is old and rotten,

dernière tempête a encore jeté une grosse branche sur ma remise !

— Tu veux m'en faire coûter ? dit Siméon en secouant sur son pied la cendre de sa pipe.

— Non, Siméon, c'est pas pour l'argent, mais la branche a failli tuer un de mes petits gars. Quelque beau jour cet arbre-là, nous tombera sur la tête !

— Il est encore solide ! Il est vieux, quoi ! Un arbre ça perd des branches comme nous autres nous perdons des cheveux. On ne meurt pas de ça ! Nous serons tous les deux dans la terre avant lui !

Charles hocha la tête.

— Écoute, Siméon, on en parlait sur le perron de l'église dimanche, et dans le rang de la Petite-Rivière, tout le monde pense comme moi : tu devrais le couper avant qu'il arrive un malheur.

— Le couper !

En disant ces mots le vieillard avait retiré

the last storm threw a big limb on my shed again !"

"You want to put me to costs ?" said Simeon, shaking out the ashes from his pipe

"No, Simeon, it is not for money, but the branch came near killing one of my young ones. Some fine day that tree will fall down on our heads !"

"It is still sound ! It is old, all right ! A tree sheds its branches just as we shed our hair. We don't die of that ! We shall both be under ground before that tree falls !"

Charles shook his head.

"Listen, Simeon, they were talking about it on the steps of the Church on Sunday, and in the Little River concession, everyone thinks as I do, you must cut it down before some thing happens."

"Cut it down ! ! ! !"

With these words the old man had put



Tu veux m'en faire coûter? dit Siméon en secouant sur son pied la cendre de sa pipe.

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sa pipe et restait là, en arrêt, les yeux agrandis devant cette conjoncture à laquelle il n'avait jamais songé.

— Oui, continua Charles, faudra que tu te décides. J'ai vu un avocat, on peut t'obliger. Mais nous sommes de bons voisins, n'est-ce pas ? Et alors.........

Effrayé d'en avoir tant dit, Charles Paradis tourna sur ses talons et rentra chez lui à grands pas, tandis que Siméon, atterré, les pieds dans l'herbe, regardait son arbre dont la cime bruissante s'enténébrait peu à peu.

Cette nuit-là, il ne dormit pas. Marie, comme bien l'on pense, avait tout entendu, et le lendemain, ce fut dans la vieille demeure sans enfant comme une menace de mort planant sur un fils unique. L'homme s'endimancha, attela le blond sur la belle voiture, et descendit au petit trot vers Québec. Quand il revint vers deux heures de relevée, Marie put lire sur la figure de Siméon la sentence du vieil arbre. Elle sortit de la commode ce qu'il faut pour écrire, remua la bouteille d'encre Antoine

away his pipe, and sat there, dumb, his eyes staring before this proposition, of which he had never dreamed.

" Yes ", continued Charles, " you must decide. I have seen a lawyer, you can be forced to do it. But we are good neighbors, aren't we ?. And then —"

Frightened at having said so much about it, Charles Paradis turned on his heel and went hurriedly home, while Simeon, rooted to the ground, his feet in the long grass, gazed on his tree, whose rustling branches were darkening little by little.

All that night, he could not sleep. Marie, as you may think, had heard everything, and the next day in that childless dwelling it was like the menace of death hovering over an only son. Simeon donned his Sunday clothes, harnessed his grey to the best waggon, and went down at a slow trot towards Quebec. When he came back about two in the afternoon, Marie could read the death-sentence of the old tree on Simeon's face. She brought out what was

jaunie par le temps, et sa vieille main tremblante, en quelques lignes laborieuses, apprit aux Hamel — aux vieux — la triste nouvelle et les invita pour une corvée après les semences.

* * *

Ce matin-là, le soleil se leva insolemment radieux. La pluie de la veille avait lavé le ciel et donné une voix claire à toutes les rigoles dégorgeant dans le fossé. La rosée brillait sur les pétales rouges des pivoines et une odeur capiteuse venant des haies d'aubépine flottait dans l'air rajeuni.

Dès sept heures, on vit arriver à pied, sa hache sur le dos et suivi de son chien, Jean Hamel, de l'Ormière. Puis une petite charrette à deux roues fit sonner le *pontage :* c'était Louis Hamel, des Grands-Déserts, avec sa vieille. Comme on s'y attendait, Julie, la veuve, arriva de Québec par l'omnibus. Vers neuf heures, Charles Hamel, depuis trente ans bedeau aux Ecureuils, descendit de la voiture de son curé.

needed for writing from the drawer, shook up the bottle of Antoine ink yellowing with age, and in a few labored lines, written with trembling hand, informed the Hamels, the older ones, of the sad news, and invited them to come to a "Bee" after the sowing.

* * *

— That morning, the sun rose uncommonly bright. The rain of the evening before had washed the sky, and given a clear voice to the little furrows leading into the ditch. The dew was sparkling on the red petals of the peonies, and a thrilling odour coming from the hawthorn hedges was floating in the freshened air. Jean Hamel from l'Ormiere, with axe on shoulder and followed by his dog, was seen arriving on foot at seven o'clock. Then a little two-wheeled cart rattled the crossing of the ditch ; it was Louis Hamel, from Grand Deserts, with his wife. As was expected, Julie, the widow, came from Quebec by omnibus. About nine, Charles Hamel, for thirty years sexton of les Ecureuils, got down from his Curé's buggy. And one after



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Et successivement tous les autres Hamel, hommes et femmes, tous gens d'âge et en cheveux blancs, parurent à la barrière du chemin.

On savait qu'il viendrait, et pourtant une émotion saisit tous les anciens, quand Joson, l'aîné de la famille — âgé de quatre-vingt-dix-sept ans, et à demi paralysé — entra dans la vieille maison, tenu sous les bras par deux de ses arrière-petits-fils.

A ce moment, l'*Angelus* s'épandit sur la campagne, passa par-dessus les sapins du petit bois et atteignit la demeure des Hamel. Par ce midi lumineux de printemps, la voix joyeuse des cloches chrétiennes s'en allait à travers champs, bénissant la semence dans la terre, le fruit nouveau sur la branche. Elle pénétrait dans les fermes par les portes et les fenêtres ouvertes et bénissait les familles en prière autour de la soupe fumante. Pour tous les vieux Hamel, hélas ! elle ne sonnait qu'un glas ! Ils songeaient au vieil arbre qui avait entendu le premier *Angelus* tinter là-haut pour les pauvres

another all the other Hamels, men and women, all elderly people with grey hair, appeared before the roadside gate.

It was known that he would come, but all the old people were visibly affetced, when Joson, the eldest of the family, ninety-seven years of age and half paralysed, came into the old house held under the arms by two of his great-grand-children.

At this moment the Angelus flooded the country, passing over the spruce in the little wood, and reaching the Hamel homestead. Through this brilliant noon of spring, the glad voice of the Christian bells floated across the fields, blessing the seed in the ground, the new fruit on the branch. It filled the farm-houses through the open doors and windows and blessed the families saying grace before the steaming souptureen. For all the old Hamels, alas ! it was sounding only a knell ! They were thinking of the old tree, which had heard the first Angelus pealing over there for the poor fugitive

Hurons fugitifs et qui allait à son tour se coucher dans la mort.

Le dîner fut simple et triste. La conversation de toutes ces vieilles gens était dans le passé, et le passé est peuplé de fantômes évanouis, de bonheurs brisés et de cercueils.

Vers deux heures, les hommes s'étant consultés du regard, ôtèrent leurs gilets et allèrent à la meule aiguiser les haches. Sur la route, les voisins et les gens du village causaient par petits groupes ; les enfants, pieds nus, passaient et repassaient en courant, un brin de mil à la bouche, faisant siffler dans l'air des harts de cornouiller.

Enfin, Siméon Hamel, tenant sa hache près du fer, sortit de la remise et s'engagea dans la descente. Ses frères, quelques-uns munis de haches aussi, le suivaient. Parmi les vieilles silencieuses, Joson resta dans la porte, écroulé dans un petit fauteuil, pleurant dans sa barbe blanche qui tremblait. Il y avait quelque chose d'inouï dans ce défilé de vieux terriens aux visages travaillés par la vie, et tous du même

Hurons, and which was going in its turn to lie down in death.

The dinner was plain and sad. The conversation of these old folks was of the past, and the past is peopled with vanished phantoms, burials and broken hopes.

About two o'clock, the men, having given each other a reminding look, took off their coats and went to the grindstone to sharpen their axes. Out on the road, the neighbors and villagers were talking in little groups : bare-footed children ran to and fro, a blade of grass in their mouths, making switches of dog-berry whistle through the air.

At last, Simeon Hamel, holding his axe near the head, came out of the shed and walked down the path. His brothers, some of them armed with axes also, followed him. Joson, sunk in a little armchair and weeping into his trembling white beard, stayed in the porch among the silent old women. There was something strange in this group of old peasants all of the same blood, and with faces fur-

sang, s'en allant frapper l'arbre qui avait vu naître et mourir tous les Hamel, tous leurs ancêtres, même ceux dont on ne parle plus mais dont on lit les noms en première page au registre de l'Ancienne-Lorette. En cette minute, ils songeaient tous aux *bers* sur lesquels l'orme avait veillé dans les grandes chaleurs, aux joyeuses voiturées qu'il avait vues sortir au grand trot les matins des noces et aux nombreux cercueils qui avaient une dernière fois, et lentement, passé dans son ombre avant de descendre à la terre.

On avait décidé de faire tomber le géant sur le chemin parce qu'il penchait un peu de ce côté et que, au-delà, il n'y avait point de construction. Siméon fit un grand signe de croix que tous les assistants répétèrent et donna le premier coup dans l'écorce. Sans tarder, la hache de Jean s'éleva, tournoya, retomba à angle et fit voler dans l'air un gros copeau noir. Les coups répétés se répercutèrent sur la vieille maison, et il sembla aux Hamel qu'elle aussi souffrait dans son âme, qu'elle gémissait, et que

rowed by age, going to cut down the tree which had seen all the Hamels being born, and seen all their ancestors die, even those who are spoken of no more, but whose names are to be read on the first page of the Ancienne Lorette register. At that moment, they were all thinking of the cradles over which the elm had watched during the very hot days, of the happy waggonloads which it had seen trotting gaily forth on the wedding-mornings, and of the many coffins which had slowly passed under its shade before being lowered into the earth.

It had been decided to make the giant fall across the road, because it leant a little to that side, and there were no buildings in that direction. Simeon made the sign of the cross, which all the others repeated, and then gave the first stroke into the bark. Without delay, John's axe rose, swung, and fell at an angle, making a large black chip fly into the air. Repeated blows re-echoed from the old house, and it seemed to the Hamels that the house also suffered in its soul, that it was groaning, and that soon,

tout à l'heure, quand l'arbre tomberait, elle s'effonderait toute ! La sueur coulait sur les fronts ridés des deux hommes et l'*aubel* était à peine entamé. Deux autres Hamel vinrent les relayer et le lamentable travail reprit avec une nouvelle vigueur. Les copeaux blonds dégouttant la sève, étaient maintenant semés partout, sur la route, sur l'herbe, sur les pivoines du pauvre jardin. L'arbre saignait du pied, mais le cœur tenait bon, et la tête, se jouant dans la brise fraîche, chantait toujours la chanson millénaire qui berce dans les nids le peuple des oiseaux. Ils voletaient encore, les oiseaux, insoucieux de la mort qui planait toute proche, sur les petits œufs couleur de ciel !

....

Deux autres haches.

....

Vers quatre heures, au moment où un nuage blanc lamé d'or passait sur le soleil, faisant taire le gazouillis dans la cime de l'orme, on entendit un craquement sourd. Le cercle des

when the tree fell, the house also would crumble to the earth! The sweat streamed on the wrinkled foreheads of the two men, and the trunk was hardly scratched. Two other Hamels came as a relay, and the sorrowful work went on with new vigour. The white chips, dripping with sap, were now scattered everywhere, on the road, the grass, and the peonies of the poor garden. The tree was bleeding at its foot, but its heart held good, and its head, rejoicing in the fresh breeze, was still singing its immemorial cradlesong for the birds which peopled its nests. These were fluttering still, unconscious of the death which was hovering so near, over those little sky-blue eggs.

. . . .

Two other axes.

. . . .

About four o'clock, at the moment when a white cloud edged with gold was passing over the sun, silencing the twittering in the top of the elm, a dull crackling was heard. The circle

curieux s'élargit précipitamment. Au bas, Siméon avait saisi la hache, et, fébrile, portait les derniers coups. L'immense amas de verdure s'inclina dans le ciel, lentement d'abord ; puis la chute s'accéléra et celui que les ouragans des siècles n'avaient pas ébranlé, s'abattit sur le chemin et dans le champ voisin, s'y écrasa avec un bruit de tempête fait du bris des branches, du choc menu des millions de feuilles, de cris et de battement d'ailes.

Il y eut cette minute de stupeur et de silence recueilli que provoque toujours le spectacle de la grandeur tombée, puis l'on se mit à l'œuvre pour débarrasser la route. On accepta les services des voisins. Les Hamel se répandirent dans la ramure et la besogne de mort continua, acharnée. A mesure que l'ébranchage avançait, le cadavre de l'arbre devenait hideux ; dépouillées de leurs feuilles, les branches amputées dressaient contre le ciel mauve d'énormes gestes de menace.

Le soir tombait et on alla souper. Marie

of the curious became precipitately larger. At the foot, Simeon had seized the axe, and was nervously dealing the last blows. The immense mass of verdure up in the sky, was bending over, slowly at first, but the fall quickened, and that which the storms of centuries had not shaken, crashed down upon the road and the adjoining field, falling with the noise of a tempest, caused by the wreck of the branches, the rustling of a million leaves, the cries of the birds and the fluttering of wings.

Then came that moment of stupor and hush which the sight of fallen grandeur always brings ; afterwards they set to work to clear the roadway. The services of neighbors were accepted. The Hamels spread out among the branches, and the work of death was stubbornly continued. In proportion as the lopping continued, the dead body of the tree became unsightly : stripped of their leaves, the amputated limbs stood out with a gesture of deep menace, against the darkening sky.

Evening came, and they went in to supper.

alluma la lampe, et comme la route ne pouvait rester barrée pour le lendemain, jour de marché, les hommes prirent des fanaux et retournèrent à l'ouvrage. Dans la nuit qui montait sans lune et étreignait toutes choses, le bruit des haches, le grincement des *godendards* s'attaquant au tronc, le pas saccadé des chevaux tirant à la chaîne les énormes billes, les petites flammes qui couraient dans l'arbre, cette hâte, cet acharnement contre une chose morte et tombée, tout cela avait l'air d'un crime !.........

....

Un mois après, le curé de l'Ancienne-Lorette recommanda aux prières de ses paroissiens l'âme de Siméon Hamel, décédé à l'âge de soixante-dix ans. Marie le suivit de près. Ils dorment maintenant tous deux à côté des ancêtres, à l'ombre de l'église, tout au bord de l'*écorre* de la rivière. En vérité, l'homme et l'arbre avaient des racines communes dans la terre des Hamel !

Marie lighted the lamp, and as the road must not remain blocked for the morrow, market-day, the men took lanterns and returned to the work. During the night, which came up without out a moon and silenced everything else, the crash of the axes, the rasping noise of the cross cut saws attacking the trunk, the jerking steps of the horses dragging the enormous billets with the chain, the little flashes moving about in the tree, this fury and hate against a thing fallen and dead, all this had the seeming of a crime.

. . . .

A month later, the Curé of Ancienne Lorette commended the soul of Simeon Hamel, departed this life at the age of seventy years, to the prayers of the congregation. Marie followed him very soon. Now they both sleep beside their ancestors, in the shadow of the Church beside the bend of the river. Truly, man and tree had their common roots in the Hamel homesstead !

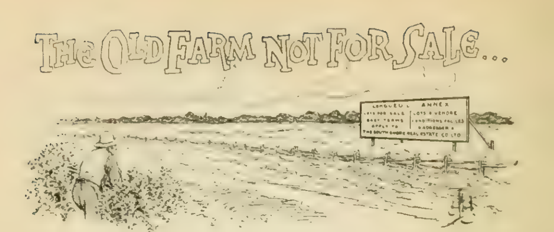
Les humbles qui vivent tout près de la terre et n'écrivent pas, retournent à elle tout entiers. Le peu qui reste d'eux tient à la maison qu'ils ont bâtie, aux choses qu'ils ont touchées, aux sillons qui leur ont donné le pain, aux arbres qui leur ont donné l'ombrage. Aussi la disparition de l'orme a-t-elle consacré l'oubli de tous les Hamel d'autre-fois. Cependant, les jours de marché, quand les maraîchers de Saint-Augustin et de Bel-Air passent au petit jour, enveloppés dans leurs *capots* gris, ils montrent à leurs enfants, du bout de leur fouet, ce qui reste de l'orme des Hamel.



The lowly, who live close to the land, and who do no writing, return to it unreservedly. The little which remains of them, clings to the house which they have built, to the things they have touched, to the furrows which have yielded them their bread, to the trees which have afforded them shade. But the disappearance of the elm has yet deepened the oblivion of the Hamels of long ago.

Nevertheless, when the market gardeners pass by, wrapped up in their grey overcoats in the early morning on market-days, they point out to their children, with their whipstocks, all that remains of the Hamel elmtree.





The day, a beautiful autumn day, was turning cooler at its close. The cart-load of oats was slowly ascending the grassy road which led to the house from the end of the farm.

Seated comfortably between the racks, Felix Delage, a man well advanced in years, was enjoying the serenity of the hour and, still more, that delicious fatigue which is the privileged lot of the worker on the land. At his feet, his son Basile, with pitchfork in one hand, was driving the horse As they turned the corner of the barn, the father exclaimed, " Look, Basile, it's done, François Millette has sold his farm." And in a lower tone he repeat-

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FRENCH-AND-ENGLISH EDITION

— of —

RÉCITS LAURENTIENS

LAURENTIAN STORIES

Ne vends pas la terre

The Old Farm not for Sale

The French by B. M. Victorin

with the translation by JAMES FERRES

MONTREAL

1922

TRANSLATOR'S FOREWORD

The translator deems it a privilege to place before his fellow-Canadians and others an English version of the series of short stories by B. M. Victorin, and, in order that the charm and beauty of the works of this author may be more fully appreciated, the original and the translation are presented on opposite pages in the same volume.

It is a new departure to offer stories in this form, but it is hoped that the reading may prove an easy and pleasant way of acquiring a better knowledge of " the other " language.

Negotiations are progressing favorably for the adoption of this series as text-books in certain of the Schools.

It is the translator's hope that these little volumes may also be found useful to the general public, as the advantage of a practical knowledge of " the other " language is universally recognized.

Any medium which will tend to promote a more intimate knowledge of the literature and the mental attitude of our French-speaking fellow-citizens, seems worthy of welcome, because, with better acquaintance, a closer sympathy, a more fully cordial entente is always possible, no matter how friendly may be the relations between the two great sections of our people.

The translator has in some cases found it advisable to deviate from the strict letter of the text, in order to conform his work with the idiom and usage of worthy writers

of English. These variations include an occasional use of adverbs for adjectives, and change in the tense of verbs, but he hopes that his version will be approved as a closely correct rendering, although necessarily lacking in that delicacy and indefinable charm which is inherent in the work of B. M. Victorin.

The author of " Recits Laurentiens " was born in the Province of Quebec, and still has his home here, His own heart and mind are an index to the heart and mind of his people, and his works in literature and science, which have gained for him much prestige in his own Province, must assuredly secure for him a large measure of distinction elsewhere.

These stories, as a rule, are based on actual occurrences, with which he had close relation.

" Ne vends Pas la Terre " " The Old Farm Not For Sale."

It was the father of his friend and colleague, who refused the temptation of a large sum of money offered for the homestead which had been in the possession of the family for more than two hundred years.

" La Croix de Saint Norbert ". " The Wayside Cross."

It was his great-grand-father who, as the first pioneer to set foot in the forest near Saint Norbert, erected a Cross on the day of his arrival. Its successor, plain and weather-worn, still stands by the wayside.

" La Corvée des Hamel." " The Chopping Bee."

It was his grand-uncle whose heart was broken by his being obliged to cut down his beautiful ancestral elm.

" Le Rosier de la Vierge." " The Madonna's Rosebush."

His grandmother related to him, as a child, the story of the Madonna's wonderful rosebush.

" Sur le Renchaussage." " Farming on the Embankment."

It is his own picture which he draws as the little boy-farmer of the embankment, whose spare time was given to trout-fishing, berry-picking, pranks and picnics.

" Charles Roux." *" Charles Roux."*

It was his own adventure which brought him into friendship with the pathetically mis-understood Charles Roux.

"Jacques Maillé." *"The Northern Colonist."*

It is his own genius which has conceived, and spread upon enduring canvas for our interest, yes, and for our tears, the affecting story of the " Northern Colonists ", with their donation of two hundred loads of fire wood (a fact) to the poor of Montreal.

The scenes of his stories are laid in that demesne which lies in the happy midway between poverty and riches ; in a land throbbing with steady, honest toil and homely joys, and marked by devotion to its Church. These scenes surround his own home, and the homes of his relatives, and the readers of the original will surely admit that he views them with the eye of an artist, and describes them with a poet's pen.

The translator feels that, however imperfect his own work may be, if it serves to bring the attention of lovers of true literature to the little master-pieces produced on our own soil by B. M. Victorin, it will by no means have been done in vain.

JAMES FERRES

131 Stanley St.,

Montreal. November 1922

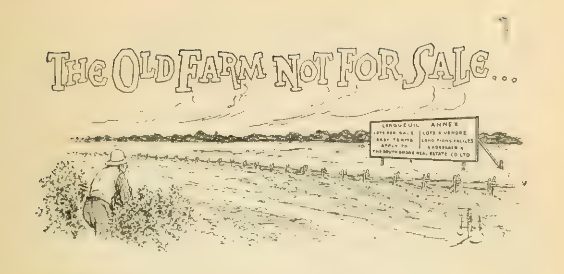


La journée, une claire journée d'automne, s'achevait dans la fraîcheur. Lentement, la charretée d'avoine remontait le chemin herbeux qui, du bout de la terre, conduit à la maison. Assis commodément entre les échelettes, le père Félix Delage jouissait de la sérénité de l'heure et plus encore de la délicieuse fatigue, lot privilégié du travailleur de la terre.

A ses pieds son fils Basile, la fourche à la main, conduisait le cheval. Comme ils tournaient au coin de la grange, le père s'exclama :

— Regarde, Basile, c'est fait ! François Millette a vendu sa terre !

Et d'une voix altérée, le vieux répéta :



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Seated comfortably between the racks, Felix Delage, a man well advanced in years, was enjoying the serenity of the hour and, still more, that delicious fatigue which is the privileged lot of the worker on the land. At his feet, his son Basile, with pitchfork in one hand, was driving the horse As they turned the corner of the barn, the father exclaimed, "Look, Basile, it's done, François Millette has sold his farm." And in a lower tone he repeat-

— Il a vendu ! Il a vendu !

Là-bas, de l'autre côté de la route, sur une énorme affiche appliquée contre le ciel bleu, les caractères démesurés de la banale réclame s'alignaient sur la tôle fraîchement peinte en blanc. Des ouvriers travaillaient encore au pied, reliant la frêle structure à des piquets plantés parmi les verges d'or et les bardanes roussies, à cent pas du chemin où stationnait un camion automobile.

— Ils ont monté ça après-midi, opina Basile.

— Oui ! Et voilà encore une terre qui va tomber en friche. Nous sommes entourés, mon garçon ! L'année dernière, Jean-Baptiste Marcil a vendu la sienne, puis, ça été Pierre Trudeau, puis Joseph Charron ! J'avais toujours cru que François tiendrait.

— Ce sont les enfants, probable ! Ils avaient tous envie de vendre, eux. Les deux jeunes qui sont en ville ont dû décider le père.

ed, " He has sold out ! He has sold !"

Over there, on the other side of the road, on an enormous billboard standing out against the blue sky, the huge letters of the staring announcement were spread out on the white ground of the freshly painted sheet iron. Workmen were still engaged at its foot, bracing the frail structure to pickets driven in among the golden-rod and the rusty burdocks, a hundred paces from the road where a motor-truck was standing.

" They put that up this afternoon," said Basile.

" Yes, and that is another farm that is going to fall into fallow. We are surrounded, my dear boy. Last year, Jean-Baptiste Marcil sold his farm, then it was Pierre Trudeau, and then Joseph Charron ! I always thought François would hold on."

" It is the children, likely ! They all wanted to sell, all of them. The two young ones in town must have persuaded their father to do it."

La charrette, en titubant, entra dans la grange et, tout en dételant, le père Delage continua :

— Mon pauvre Basile, notre chemin de Chambly s'en va ! Nos belles terres, les meilleures de par ici sont perdues pour l'agriculture ! Il n'y a plus d'agriculture !

Les brancards touchèrent le *pontage*. Basile s'empara du cheval et entra dans l'étable. D'un pas lassé, le vieux prit du côté de la maison.

Un beau type canadien, ce Félix Delage ! De taille moyenne, avec un léger embonpoint, il ressemblait aux deux chênes plantés devant sa porte. Visage énergique un peu hâlé, chevelure complète et toute blanche — de la neige sur de l'ivoire — l'on s'étonnait de trouver sous des sourcils d'argent, des yeux bleus d'enfant. Il portait aux lèvres un sourire établi, sourire d'enfant aussi, respecté par les tempêtes de soixante-dix années de vie et qui prenait toute sa signification lorsqu'il parlait de cette voix haute et un peu voilée qui lui était propre.

The cart went jolting into the barn, and while unhitching the father continued :

" My poor Basile, our Chambly road is done for ! Our fine farms, the best anywhere around here, are lost for agriculture ! There is no more farming !"

The shafts fell to the floor. Basile took the horse and went into the stable. With wearied step, the old man made his way to the house.

A fine type of Canadian was Felix Delage ! Of middle height, rather stout, he was like the two oaks planted before his door. With strong sun-burnt face, thick and very white hair — snow on ivory —, one was surprised to find under his silvered eyebrows, the blue eyes of a child. His lips wore a constant smile, that also the smile of a child, preserved through the storms of seventy years of life, and which was given full expression when he spoke in the strong and tempered voice which was natural to him.

La terre des Delage était l'une des plus anciennes et des plus riches de la région. Elle donnait sur ce vieux chemin qui relie Chambly à Longueuil et rejoint le Saint-Laurent à l'endroit précis où Charles LeMoyne avait bâti sa maison. Cette route célèbre, les vieux l'appellent encore le " chemin de Boston "; avant l'avènement des chemins de fer, c'était la voie du trafic, la voie des invasions aussi ; faire l'historique du Chemin de Chambly serait écrire une bonne moitié de l'histoire économique et militaire du Canada.

L'ancêtre des Delage, officier de cavalerie libéré du service, vint sous le régime français prendre une terre à deux milles et demi du village de Longueuil. Il appert que ce Delage était de petite noblesse, et vraiment, ceux qui ont pratiqué le vieux Félix reconnaissaient chez lui une hérédité évidente, un raffinement de langage et de manières peu connu chez nos habitants.

Félix Delage appartenait à cette vieille école

The Delage farm was one of the oldest and richest of the district. It fronted on that old road which joins Chambly and Longueuil, and touches the Saint Lawrence at the exact spot where Charles LeMoyne had built his house. This well-known road, the old people still call it " the Boston Road ", before the building of railways, was the highway of travel, the route of invasions also ; to write the story of the Chambly Road would mean writing a good share of the economic and military history of Canada.

An ancestor of the Delages, a Cavalry Officer discharged from service, came during the French regime to take up land two miles and a half from the village of Longueuil.

It appears that this Delage was of the yeomanry, or landed gentry, and indeed, those who have conversed with our Felix recognize his evident good birth, in a refinement of language and manners not always found among our people.

Felix Delage belonged to the old school of

de croyants qui ont la sagesse d'accepter la religion — comme la vie elle-même — tout d'une pièce et, sous la chaire de l'église de Longueuil, il n'était pas plus belle famille que la sienne. Mais l'amour de la terre, l'enthousiasme pour la culture, — la vraie culture : intelligente, raisonnée et méthodique,— distinguait surtout cette belle nature d'homme. L'étable octogonale, construite d'après des plans à lui, était une merveille d'ingéniosité, connue de vingt milles à la ronde. Fondateur et président du Cercle agricole, il était depuis trente ans le conseiller, le modèle, l'âme de tous les cultivateurs du Chemin de Chambly.

Et voilà que sur le retour, le vieil agriculteur voyait crouler son beau rêve de rénovation agricole. La folie de la spéculation immobilière, après avoir ravagé l'île de Montréal, débordait à présent sur la rive sud, submergeait les abords du vieux Longueuil et s'avançait dans la campagne. Comme de malsains champignons, surgissaient au milieu des champs les petites cabanes carrées et hideusement badi-

believers who have the wisdom to accept religion, as we accept life itself, unreservedly, and no finer family than his own used to sit under the pulpit of the Longueuil Church. But love of the land and enthusiasm for its cultivation, proper farming, methodical and intelligently reasoned farming, distinguished above everything the fine nature of this man. His octagonal stable, built after plans of his own, was a marvel of ingenuity, and was known within a radius of twenty miles. Founder and President of the Agricultural Society, he had been for thirty years the adviser, the model, the inspiration of all the farmers of the Chambly Road.

And here on his return the veteran agriculturist sees his beautiful dream of agricultural improvement crumbling to the dust. The craze of real estate speculation, after ravaging the island of Montreal, was now invading the South shore, overrunning the surroundings of old Longueuil, and advancing into the open country. Like unwholesome mushrooms, the real estate agents' little square huts, hideously

geonnées des agents d'immeubles. Les affiches disgracieuses se levaient partout de l'herbe, épitaphes monstrueuses d'un immense cimetière, celui de la vieille terre féconde et fidèle. Successivement les voisins avaient vendu, et Félix Delage ne comptait plus autour de lui que son fils Joseph dont la terre touchait à la sienne au sud, Basile qui cultivait le bien avec lui et son vieil ami François Millette qui venait, le soir, sur la *galerie*, causer du bon vieux temps. Et celui-là aussi allait lui manquer, s'en aller, trahir la terre et le pacte tacite qui les liait tous deux ! Il était venu dimanche cependant, sans parler de rien. La honte, sans doute, lui fermait la bouche ! Comme les consciences d'enfant, les consciences de vieillard frémissent sous la faute !

En songeant à ces choses, le père Félix, sans caresser ses petits-enfants, entra dans la grande cuisine où les femmes allaient et venaient et s'écroula dans une berceuse, près de la fenêtre.

painted, were springing up in the middle of the fields. Unsightly billboards were stuck up all over the grass, the monstrous epitaphs of an immense cemetery, that of the good old fertile and faithful land. One after another, the neighbors had sold out, and Felix Delage could no longer count any one around him except his son Joseph, whose farm adjoined his own on the South, Basile, who worked the land along with him, and his old friend, François Millette, who was coming to sit on the verandah this very evening to talk over the good old times. And even he was going to fail him, was going away, a traitor to the ground and to the tacit understanding which bound them both together ! And, for all that, he had come last Sunday, without saying a word about it. It was shame, no doubt, which closed his mouth ! Like a child's conscience, the conscience of an old man shudders at wrong-doing !

Thinking of these things, Felix Delage, without greeting his grandchildren, came into the large kitchen where the women were going

— Mes petites filles ! Encore un malheur ! François Millette a vendu !

Les trois femmes s'attendaient à cette explosion. Elles se regardèrent sans rien dire.

— Nous voilà tout seuls sur le chemin de Chambly jusqu'au troisième mille ! Tout seuls !

Et, cramponné aux bras de sa chaise, le vieillard se prit à pleurer. Les jeunes enfants de Basile, comprenant à la douleur du grand-père qu'il se passait quelque chose, se turent et allèrent s'asseoir sur le banc derrière la table. Le silence se fit dans la cuisine. Au bout d'un long moment, Basile entra à son tour et posa sur la table la cruche enveloppée d'un linge blanc. Sans un mot, il pendit à une fiche de bois son grand chapeau de paille et marcha vers la pompe en retroussant ses manches.

Le père Félix, nerveux, quitta sa chaise et sortit sur le chemin. Le soleil se couchait glorieux dans des nuages pourpres sur lesquels se découpaient nettement la courbe molle du

to and fro, and sank into his rocking-chair near the window.

"Well, little girls, another piece of bad luck! François Millette has sold out!"

The three women were waiting for this outbreak. They looked at each other without saying a word.

"We are left all alone on the Chambly road up to the third mile! All alone!"

And, doubled up on the arms of his chair, the old man began to weep. Basile's young children, understanding from their grandfather's grief that something had happened, were silent, and went to sit down on the bench behind the table. There was silence in the kitchen. After a little while, Basile came in and set a jar wrapped in a white towel on the table. Without a word, he hung his big straw hat on a wooden peg, and walked towards the pump, rolling up his sleeves.

Felix, the father, nervously left his chair and went out into the road. The sun was seting gloriously amid purple clouds, against

Mont-Royal et le fin clocher de Longueuil. Dans les champs, les grands ormes épars commençaient à régner sur le soir, et leurs rameaux paresseusement agités, lutinaient dans le silence quelque chose d'invisible. Mais pour le vieillard toute cette paix du soir s'abolissait par la provocation de la longue affiche brutalement interposée entre le ciel et lui, et qu'il aurait désormais devant les yeux semaine et dimanche, par tous les temps, par le soleil et par la pluie, narguant sans cesse sa foi profonde et son amour de la terre !

Les ouvriers, leur travail fini, regagnaient le camion qui trépida un instant, puis démarra soudain en soulevant la poussière blanche de la route. Et Félix Delage resta là, appuyé à la barrière, entre les deux massifs de lilas, à regarder le champ profané où couraient encore des frissons de lumière rose.

Alors, une petite voix claire et indécise s'éleva derrière lui :

— *Pépére* ! venez souper !

Subitement arraché à son rêve et à sa pei-

which the soft curve of Mount Royal and the fine steeple of Longueuil were sharply defined. In the fields, the great scattered elms were beginning to brood over the dusk, and their lazily waving branches seemed to be silently and playfully signalling to something invisible. But for the old man all this evening peace was set at naught by the annoyance of the long billboard brutally interposed between the sky and himself, and this he would constantly have before his eyes weekdays and Sundays, rain or shine, in unceasing defiance of his profound faith and his love of the land !

The workmen, their job finished, reached the truck again, which rattled a moment and then started, raising the white dust of the road. And Felix Delage stayed there leaning on the gate between the two lilac hedges, watching the violated field, over which tremors of rosy light were still flickering.

Then a clear little wavering voice rose behind him : " Grandpa, come to supper ".

Suddently snatched from his dream and his

ne, le vieillard prit le petit Joseph dans ses bras et rentra.

....

Les après-midi de dimanche ont une douceur exquise au cœur de l'automne. Ce n'est plus la fournaise de l'été, et la froidure n'est pas encore venue fermer les portes et jeter des châles sur les épaules des femmes. Sur la *galerie* des Delage on a sorti toutes les berceuses et tous les fauteuils. L'aîné des fils, Joseph, est là avec sa famille. Les enfants jouent à cache-cache sous la tonnelle, courant dans l'herbe et jusque sur le chemin. A un bout de la *galerie* les femmes causent avec animation, tandis qu'à l'autre extrémité Basile et Joseph encadrent le père et devisent des travaux de l'automne. Les autos se suivent sur la route sans cesse parcourue par de petits nuages de poussière : petites machines portant des familles bourgeoises qui profitent des derniers beaux dimanches ; touring-cars et luxueuses limousines courant

trouble, the grandfather took little Joseph in his arms, and went in.

....

Sunday afternoons in the heart of autumn have an delicious softness of their own. There is no longer the grilling heat of summer, and the cold has not yet set in to shut the doors and throw shawls over the women's shoulders. On the Delage's gallery they have set out all the rockers and armchairs. The eldest son, Joseph, is there with his family. The children are playing hide-and-seek under the arbor, running in the grass and as far as the road. At one end of the verandah the women are having a lively talk, while at the other end Basile and Joseph are on each side of their father and planning the fall work. Motor-cars follow each other along the road incessantly, overhung with little clouds of dust : little machines carrying bourgeois families who are taking advantage of the last fine Sundays ; touring cars and luxurious limousines running at a great pace

à grande allure vers la frontière : défilé monotone, étourdissant, auquel néanmoins les Delage, comme tous les résidents du Chemin de Chambly sont habitués.

Tout à coup une lourde machine qui a corné plusieurs fois franchit brusquement la barrière et vient stopper devant la maison. Le chauffeur allume un cigare tandis que deux messieurs descendent de l'arrière. L'un deux, gros homme à figure injectée de sang, tend au père Félix venu à leur rencontre une carte d'affaires que celui-ci lit distraitement.

— Vous êtes M. Félix Delage ? Je suis Stevenson, agent d'immeubles. J'ai des capitaux considérables à placer sur la Rive Sud. L'on m'a dit que votre terre n'est pas vendue et je viens l'examiner pour vous faire des propositions. Je suis un acheteur sérieux et pourrai vous fournir toutes les recommandations désirables.

— Mon cher monsieur, répondit Félix, quoi-

towards the frontier ; a monotonous, tiresome string, to which, however, the Delages, like all the people on the Chambly Road, are accustomed.

All at once a heavy machine, which has blown the horn several times, suddenly swerves through the gateway and comes to a stop in front of the house.

The chauffeur lights a cigar while two gentlemen come out from the back seat. One of them, a big man with a flushed face, hands Felix, coming to meet them, a business card, which the latter reads carelessly.

" You are Mr. Felix Delage ? My name is Stevenson, Real Estate Agent. I have considerable money to place on the South Shore.

I am told your farm is not sold, and I have come to look at it and make you a proposition.

I seriously intend buying, and can furnish you with satisfactory references. "

" My dear Sir, " replied Felix, " although

que votre nom me soit parfaitement inconnu, je veux bien croire que vous êtes un acheteur sérieux, mais je dois vous dire tout de suite que ma terre n'est pas à vendre.

Stevenson ne parut pas avoir entendu. Allumant un cigare, il poursuivit, en homme habitué à cette entrée en matière :

— Je suis en état de vous accorder les meilleures conditions possible, conditions où le comptant entrera pour une bonne part. Je vous présente mon notaire, M. Forest, qui est prêt à bâcler l'affaire immédiatement. Voulez-vous que nous allions un peu voir le terrain ?

— Certainement, je me ferai un plaisir de vous accompagner. Mais je vous répète que ma terre n'est pas à vendre, tant que je vivrai et que mes fils auront leurs deux bras.

Les trois hommes s'engagèrent dans le sentier qui conduit derrière les bâtiments. La vue s'étendait de là sur les champs frais moissonnés, hérissés d'un chaume court et doré. Les fossés profonds et parfaitement alignés couraient

your name is entirely unknown to me, I am ready to believe you seriously intend to buy, but I must tell you at once that my land is not for sale."

Stevenson appeared not to have heard. Lighting a cigar, he continued, like a man accustomed to this way of going about a deal.

"I am in a position to allow you the best possible terms, in which ready money will come in for a good share. Let me introduce my Notary, Mr. Forest, who is ready to close the deal immediately. Will you let us take a little look at the place ?"

"Certainly, I shall be pleased to go with you. But I repeat that my farm is not for sale, not while I live, and while my two sons have their good arms."

The three men set out into the pathway which led to the rear of the buildings. The view stretched from there over fields freshly harvested, bristling with short golden stubble. Deep and perfectly aligned ditches ran towards the east, as far as the edge of the woods, where

vers l'est jusqu'à la lisière du bois où tremble le feuillage léger des petits bouleaux blancs.

— Superbe ! murmurait entre ses dents l'agent d'immeubles.

— Vous avez là, monsieur, une terre qui a toujours été parfaitement cultivée par les vieux et que je tâche d'entretenir comme eux. Vous ne trouverez pas un bas-fond, pas un endroit inculte. Quinze jours plus tôt, ce champ là-bas, vous aurait montré ce que la terre rend à ceux qui lui donnent le travail et la fumure. Tenez ! il fallait voir, au mois de juillet, cette pièce de trèfle entre les deux ormes ; c'était blanc et fourni comme le dos des moutons !. . .

— Vous allez jusqu'au bois ?

— Jusqu'au bois à droite, oui. Et pour la profondeur, jusqu'au rang de Gentilly. Voyez-vous les poteaux du téléphone ? C'est la limite.

— Très bien. J'offre $25,000 comptant Cela vous va-t-il ?

— Elle vaut plus que cela !

— Vous faites le difficile. Savez-vous ce

the light foliage of the little white birches was quivering.

" Superb !" murmured the Estate Agent, under his breath.

" You see there, Sir, a farm which has always been perfectly cultivated by my forbears, and which I am trying to treat as they did. You will not find any swamp, any place uncultivated. Fifteen days ago, that field over there would have shown you what the ground yields to those who give it work and fertilizer. Look! last July you ought to have seen that piece of clover between the two elms. It was as thick and white as a sheep's back.

" You go as far as the woods ?"

" Up to the woods on the right, yes. And for depth, as far as the Gentilly range. You see those telephone posts ? That is the boundary."

" All right, I offer twenty-five thousand dollars, cash. Does that suit you ?'"

" It is worth more than that".

" You are making difficulties. Do you





Très bien, j'offre $25.000 comptant. Cela vous va-t-il?

All right, I offer you $25,000 cash. Does that suit you?

qu'ont été payées les terres voisines ?

— Je ne le sais pas et je ne veux pas le savoir.

— Combien demandez-vous ?

— Vous ne me comprenez pas !

— Vraiment ?

Et le financier, secouant du doigt la cendre de son cigare, commença d'examiner plus attentivement ce type d'homme, nouveau pour lui.

Le vieux Delage continua :

— Vous avez des enfants ?

— Non ! Je suis célibataire et je m'en trouve bien !

Félix fronça ses sourcils de neige et se tourna vers le notaire, qui jouait avec un brin de mil.

— Et vous, Monsieur ?

— Moi ? J'ai six enfants !

Et les yeux du notaire plongeaient dans ceux de son interlocuteur comme pour dire : Je suis de votre race, nous nous comprenons, allez !

know what was paid for the neighboring lands ?

" I don't know, and I don't want to know."

" How much do you ask ?"

" You don't understand me !"

" Really ?"

And the capitalist, flicking off the cigar-ash with his finger, began to examine more closely this type of man, a new type for him.

Felix Delage continued ;

" You have children ?"

" No, I am bachelor, and I am satisfied ".

" Felix furled his snowy brows and turned towards the Notary, who was playing with a bit of grass ;

" And you, Sir ?"

" Oh ! I have six children,"

And the Notary's eyes looked straight into those of his questioner, as if to say : I am of your race, we understand each other, you see !

" All right ! these children have cost you,

— Eh bien ! ces enfants, ils vous ont coûté, à votre femme et à vous, bien du travail et causé bien du *trouble*. Si on leur offrait, à vos enfants, $25,000 pour leur mère, que répondraient-ils ?

Le notaire sourit silencieusement.

— Moi, poursuivit Félix, je suis l'enfant de ma terre ! La terre, voyez-vous, messieurs, c'est l'aïeule dont le soin nous est légué par la vie et la mort des autres. Comme les très vieux, elle est sans mouvement et sans défense, mais elle sait encore sourire par toutes ses fleurs, et, au bon matin, pleurer de tous ses brins d'herbe. Elle a un langage mystérieux, mais distinct comme une parole humaine pour qui sait l'écouter. Et tenez, peut-être qu'à cet instant, monsieur Stevenson, vous n'entendez que les cris des oiseaux et le klaxon des autos sur le chemin. Mais pour moi, il s'élève une voix de ces grands champs, de l'herbe courte et des taillis d'aubépine, et cette voix implore ma pitié et me dit : " Je t'ai toujours bien servi ! ne me vends pas !" Voilà pourquoi je vous dis

you and your wife, a lot of work, and caused you a lot of trouble . If anyone offered those children of yours $25,000, for their mother, what would they answer ?"

The Notary smiled quietly.

" As for me, continued Felix, I am the child of my land ! The land, do you see, gentlemen, is the ancestor whose care is transmitted to us by the life and death of others. Like the very old, it is incapable of movement or defense but it knows how to smile with all its flowers and in the morning to have a tear on every blade of grass. It has a mysterious language, but as distinct as the human word for him who knows how to listen. And, look here, no doubt at this moment, Mr. Stevenson, you hear nothing ing but the chirping of the birds, and the klaxon of the autos on the road. But for me, a voice rises from these wide fields, from the cut grass and from the hawthorn hedges, and that voice implores my pity, and says : " I have always served you well, do not part with me ". That is why I tell you that my land is worth more

que ma terre vaut plus que tout ce que vous m'offrez !

Stevenson jeta son cigare. Sa psychologie spéciale se trouvait en défaut. Ce type était-il sincère ? Ou bien, avait-on affaire à un rustre plus habile à décrocher la forte somme ? A tout événement, Stevenson se résolut à user du procédé classique de la tentation permanente.

— Eh bien ! c'est entendu ! je vous offre $30,000, avec $10,000 comptant, le reste payable en quatre versements annuels. C'est mon dernier prix. Quand vous serez décidé, passez chez mon notaire : il a toute autorité. Vous avez ma carte ?

Ils reprirent le chemin de l'auto. Stevenson marchait le premier, les pouces engagés dans les entournures de son gilet. Le notaire musa un peu pour se rapprocher du père Félix. Furtivement, il lui prit la main, la serra avec émotion et lui dit tout bas :

— Je vous approuve ! Tenez bon ! Ne cédez pas !

....

than all that you offer me!"

Stevenson threw away his cigar. His special psychology found itself at fault. Was this a sincere type? Or, indeed, was he dealing with a rustic who was rather skilful in squeezing out big money? At all events, Stevenson resolved to use the classic plan of permanent temptation.

"All right, it is understood! I offer you $30,000, with $10,000 cash, the balance payable in four annual instalments. That is my last price. When you have decided, call on my Notary; he has full authority. You have my card."

They took the path for the motor-car Stevenson walked first, with his thumbs hooked in the armholes of his waistcoat. The Notary lingered a moment to draw near to Felix. Secretly he took his hand, pressing it warmly, and said quite low:

"I quite approve! Stick to it! Don't give way!

Trois années sont passées, durant lesquelles la mort a travaillé au foyer des Delage. Et la traîtresse a bien choisi ses coups ! C'est d'abord Joseph, l'aîné des fils, qui tombe déchiré par les dents de sa faucheuse. Semaine d'horreur dont on évite de parler à la maison ! Et voilà maintenant que Basile, le seul homme valide qui reste, est là, dans la grande chambre, terrassé par la pneumonie, dérivant lentement mais fatalement vers la mort.

Les femmes vont et viennent silencieusement. Les enfants, groupés autour d'une de leurs tantes, récitent le chapelet. De temps à autre, le vieux se rapproche du malade et lui dit quelques mots, de ces mots étrangers, sans rapport avec la situation, les seuls que les grandes douleurs savent trouver.

Le père Delage a bien changé. Un mal inconnu, un mal de vieillard lui étreint le cœur. Il ne travaille plus. C'est à peine s'il peut, à pas lents, se rendre au bout du pacage. Sa vie se restreint, se circonscrit. Elle tend visible-

Three years passed away, during which death was busy at the Delage fireside. And the traitor chose his strokes well! First it was Joseph, the eldest of the sons, who fell torn by the teeth of the reaping machine. A week of horror, of which they avoid speaking at the house! And now it is Basile, the only capable man who remains, there he is, in the large room, down with pneumonia, and drifting slowly but surely to death.

The women go and come silently. The children, gathered round one of their aunts, are saying their beads. From time to time, the father goes near the sick man, and says a few words, strange words, which have no bearing on the situation, the only words that great grief can utter.

The father Delage has greatly changed. An unknown complaint, an old man's trouble, affects his heart. He does not do any more work. It is with difficulty that he can walk with slow steps to the end of the pasture. His life is restricted, confined. It is perceptibly

ment vers son centre, vers la terre qui l'accueillera bientôt. Et cette dernière douleur va l'achever. Il les repasse toutes, ses douleurs, les anciennes d'abord, pendant que devant le poêle, il chauffe ses pieds frileux. Dans un coin de son vieux cœur, toujours tendu de noir, il réveille le souvenir de sa femme à lui, trouvée morte un matin à ses côtés. Il se revoit comme si c'était hier, sortant de la chambre pour annoncer aux enfants qu'ils n'ont plus de mère. Puis, c'est le départ d'Herménégilde pour la communauté des Frères des Écoles Chrétiennes. Un an, et la porte de la vieille maison s'ouvre encore pour laisser passer pour toujours Marie-Angèle, qui s'en va revêtir la livrée grise de la Charité. Enfin, c'est l'horrible tragédie de l'été dernier, la faucheuse ensanglantée, la masse de chair meurtrie, sur le grand lit, là-bas !

Maintenant, le dernier fils va le quitter aussi : le prêtre et le médecin, tous deux, ont condamné Basile. C'est fini ! Ah ! Dieu est juste, sans doute ! mais pour nous sa justice

tending towards its centre, towards the earth which will soon give it welcome. And this last affliction is going to be more than he can bear. He recalls them all, all his griefs, the oldest ones first, while he is warming his chilly feet before the stove. In a corner of his aged heart, always in mourning, he reawakens the memory of his wife, found dead one morning at his side. He sees himself as it were yesterday, coming out of his room to tell the children that they are motherless. Then, it Hermenegilde's leaving for the community of the Christian Brothers Schools. One year later, and the door of the old house opens to let Marie Angele through to wear the grey robe of Charity for the rest of her life. And then, it is the horrible tragedy of last summer, the blood-stained mowing-machine in the field, and that mass of mangled flesh lying on the double-bed, just over there !

Now, his youngest son is going to leave him, too : both the priest and the doctor give no hope for Basile.

It is finished ! Ah ! God is just, no doubt,

est parfois bien obscure ! Pourquoi semble-t-il s'acharner à ruiner une famille qui l'a toujours servi dans la sincérité de son cœur ?

Le père Félix se lève et sort sur la *galerie.* L'air est gris, et sur les grands champs déserts tombe, comme à regret, une neige douce et moelleuse. Déjà sur les labours l'angle des mottes s'argente. La terre, elle aussi, meurt, et pour l'un et pour l'autre, le ciel compatissant, tisse un suaire.........

....

Le printemps est revenu et avec lui la joie du soleil chaud, les grands coups de sève dans les bourgeons et, au fond de l'herbe, le puissant réveil de la vie.

Le père Delage a encore vieilli. On n'entend plus, dans la maison que le pas menu des femmes et le babil d'Alfred et de Joseph, les orphelins de Basile. Faute de bras, la terre, la bonne terre des Delage, pour la première fois depuis deux cents ans, va rester en friche. Les sillons ouverts par Basile ne seront pas fermés.

but to us his justice is often very obscure ! Why does he seem bent upon ruining a family which has always served Him in all sincerity of heart?

Felix rises and goes out on the verandah. The sky is grey, and a soft moist snow is falling, as though in regret, on the wide deserted fields. The edges of the clods on the ploughed ground are already silvered with snow . The earth, the earth also, is dying, and for the one and the other the compassionate skies are weaving a shroud.

The Spring has come again, and with it the joy of the warm sun, the great floods of sap in the buds, and, at the roots of the plants, the thrilling renewal of life.

Felix Delage has grown more feeble. No longer is anything heard in the house but the quiet footfalls of the women, and the prattle of Basile's orphans, Alfred and Joseph. For want of workers, the land, the good Delage farm, for the first time in two hundred years, is going to lie fallow. The furrows opened up by Basile will not be closed. Forbidden weeds

Les herbes proscrites vont prendre leur revanche et bientôt il n'y aura plus sur les beaux champs, au lieu du blé d'or et de l'avoine mouvante, que moutarde, herbe pouilleuse et chicorée.

Une seule solution, douloureuse ! Faire encan du roulant, mettre la terre en vente, s'en aller au village de Longueuil avec les autres, les traîtres ! L'épreuve suprême, venue de la main de Dieu !...

C'est ce matin l'adieu définitif. Sur le pignon de pierre grise la rosée pleure sur les tristes mots : " *Terre à vendre.*" Déjà les portes des bâtiments sont cadenassées, les fenêtres condamnées. Après la mort des gens, la mort des choses ! Plus de beuglements, plus de gloussements ! Peut-être parce qu'il n'a pas, à son habitude, entendu la voix claironnante des coqs, le soleil reste caché derrière le lourd écran des nuages. La voiture tout attelée attend devant la porte ; le gros du ménage est parti et demain, un mercenaire quelconque viendra prendre les dernières épaves : quelques chaises, la

are going to take their revenge, and soon there will be nothing on these beautiful fields but wild mustard, foul weeds and chicory, in the place of waving oats and golden wheat.

One only resource, unhappily! Auction the rolling stock, put up the land for sale, and go away to the village of Longueuil with those others, the traitors!

The supreme trial, coming from the hand of God.

This morning sees the final farewell. On the grey stone gable the dew is weeping over these sad words : " Farm For Sale ". Already the doors of the buildings are chained, the windows fastened up. After the death of people, the death of things ! No more lowing of cattle, no more clucking of poultry ! Perhaps because he has not heard the accustomed call of chanticleer, the sun stays hidden behind a heavy bank of clouds. The waggon, already hitched, is waiting before the door, the bulk of the furniture has left, and tomorrow some hired man will come to gather up the last rem-

lampe, le vieux lit des ancêtres, qui, le dernier, sortira de la maison.

Ce départ est une agonie pour le vieux Félix. Il erre devant la porte, sans but, écoutant une dernière fois le murmure du vent dans le gros saule, pendant que ses filles et les deux enfants ferment les volets. Il porte, ce matin-là, son *capot* d'étoffe et son feutre noir. Il regarde tout et partout, s'emplit les yeux de la tonnelle où la vigne reverdit, de la vieille meule qui faisait luire les faux et dont personne n'a voulu, de la grange octogonale, de toutes ces choses qu'il ne reverra plus, qu'il ne veut plus revoir.

La veuve de Basile est déjà dans la voiture. D'un pas rapide l'homme marche vers le fond de la cour et jette un long regard sur les guérets qui s'en vont à rangs pressés vers Gentilly, sur les deux gros *mulons* de paille au bout de l'horizon, sur le Bois du Lac d'où émerge le groupe erratique des gros pins noirs.

C'est bien fini ! Il est clos, le rêve simple

nants, some chairs, the lamp, and the old ancestral bed, which will be the last thing to leave leave the house.

This departure is an agony to the aged Felix. He wanders aimlessly in front of the of the door, listening for the last time to the murmur of the wind in the big willow, while his daughters and the two children close the shutters. He is wearing this morning his overcoat of homespun and his black felt. He looks at everything everywhere, gazes at the arbour where the vine is renewing its green, at the old grindstone which used to make the scythes shine, and which no one wanted, at the octagonal barn, at all those things which he will see no more, which he no longer wants to see.

Basile's widow is already in the waggon. With quicker step the man walks towards the end of the yard and throws a lingering look over the fields which stretch away in close order towards Gentilly, over at the two large strawstacks in the distance, at the Bois du Lac, where the group of big black pines stand out

et tenace de s'identifier au sol natal, de s'enraciner à lui pour toujours. Et à cette minute, sa vue s'embrouille, il lui semble voir tous les anciens Delage accoudés auprès de lui : l'ancêtre, l'officier de cavalerie dont il a les pistolets et le sabre ; Jean, l'aïeul, dont le profil courbé et l'éternel tablier de cuir hantent ses souvenirs lointains ; Alexis, le père, qui chantait toujours en revenant des champs la vieille chanson d'amour, sans doute apportée de France sur la selle de l'officier :

> " *Dès le matin au point du jour*
> " *J'ai entendu chanter l'amour.*

Saisi par tous ces revenants, le vieux Delage s'appuie à la clôture et se met à pleurer ! Sa forte poitrine se soulève violemment sous les sanglots longtemps contenus, les larmes coulent abondantes de ses beaux yeux de vieillard. Autour de lui, les oiseaux chantent follement, la terre insensible sourit, comme elle fait parfois, dans les cimetières, pendant que

so prominently.

It is all done with! It has vanished, the simple and clinging dream of identifying himself with his native soil, of being himself rooted in it for ever. And at that moment, his sight is confused, he seems to see the former Delages grouped near him; his ancestor, the Cavalry officer, whose pistols and sabre he has: Jean, the ancestor whose aquiline profile and everlasting leathern apron haunt his far-off memories: Alexis, his father, who, coming home from the fields used always to sing the old love-song, brought, no doubt, from France under the Officer's saddle:

"See the rosy morn is breaking
"Hark! the voice of love awaking!"

Overcome with all these recollections, the aged Delage leans against the fence and weeps. His stout chest heaves with emotions long restrained, and abundant tears flow from his dear old eyes. Around him, the birds are singing gladly, the unfeeling earth is smiling, as she sometimes does in cemeteries, when children





Il revint vers la maison, saisit une perche et arracha l'affiche.

He went back towards the house, seized a pole and tore down the placard:

Farm for Sale

des enfants voient descendre dans la fosse le corps de leur mère.

Tout à coup, l'homme sentit qu'on le tirait par son habit. Il se retourna. Alfred et Joseph étaient là, en larmes aussi, qui regardaient pleurer leur grand-père. Un moment encore tous trois se turent, puis Alfred, prenant la main du vieillard, lui dit :

— *Pépére !* nous avons quelque chose à te demander ?

— Quoi donc, mes petits enfants ?

— Quand nous serons plus vieux, nous voulons cultiver — comme papa et toi ! *Pépére,* veux-tu ? Ne vends pas la terre !...

Un instant, Félix resta interdit. Les petits l'avaient compris, deviné. Au dernier moment, l'amour de la terre qui est dans le sang des Delage, s'éveillait en eux et parlait ! Le flambeau sur le point de s'éteindre, se rallumait de lui-même à la fine brise venue de dessus les champs, la source tarie se remettait à couler.

Sans prendre la peine d'essuyer des larmes

see their mother's body lowered into the grave.

All at once, Felix felt some one tugging at his coat. He turned round. Alfred and Joseph were there, also in tears, and watching their grandfather weep. Another moment, and all three were quiet, then Alfred, taking the old man's hand, said to him :

" Grandpa, we have something to ask you".

" What is it, my little boys ?"

" When we are older, we want to work the farm..... like papa and you ! Ah ! Grandpa, won't you ? Don't sell the farm ! "

For a moment, Felix stood stupified. The little ones had understood him, they had guessed. At the last moment, the love of the land, which is in the Delage blood, had awakened in them, and was speaking ! The torch, at the point of extinction, rekindled of itself in the fine breeze coming from over the fields, the sealed fountain was beginning to flow.....

Without taking the trouble to wipe away

qui ne savaient plus bien ce qu'elles exprimaient, le vieux, attirant à lui ses deux petits-fils, les embrassa silencieusement. Puis, à grands pas, il revint vers la maison, saisit une perche et arracha l'affiche : *Terre à vendre*, qui disparut avec un bruit sourd dans les hautes tiges d'herbe Saint-Jean !...

. . . .

Voilà pourquoi il y a, sur le chemin de Chambly, pas très loin de Longueuil, une terre abandonnée... et qui n'est pas à vendre !



the tears, which no longer expressed his feelings, the old man, drawing his two grandsons to him, silently kissed them. Then, with firm steps, he went back towards the house, seized a pole, and tore down the placard, " Farm For Sale ", which disappeared with a dull sound among the high stalks of Saint John's wort.

....

And that is why there is an abandoned farm on the Chambly Road, not very far from Longueuil, an abandoned farm which is NOT FOR SALE.



THE MADONNA'S ROSEBUSH



GRANDMOTHER, is that rosebush growing on the Church wall very old ?

" Oh, children, it is older than I am. I am seventy-five, and I have always seen it there, just under the steeple, beside the niche."

" But who was it that went and planted it so high up ? "

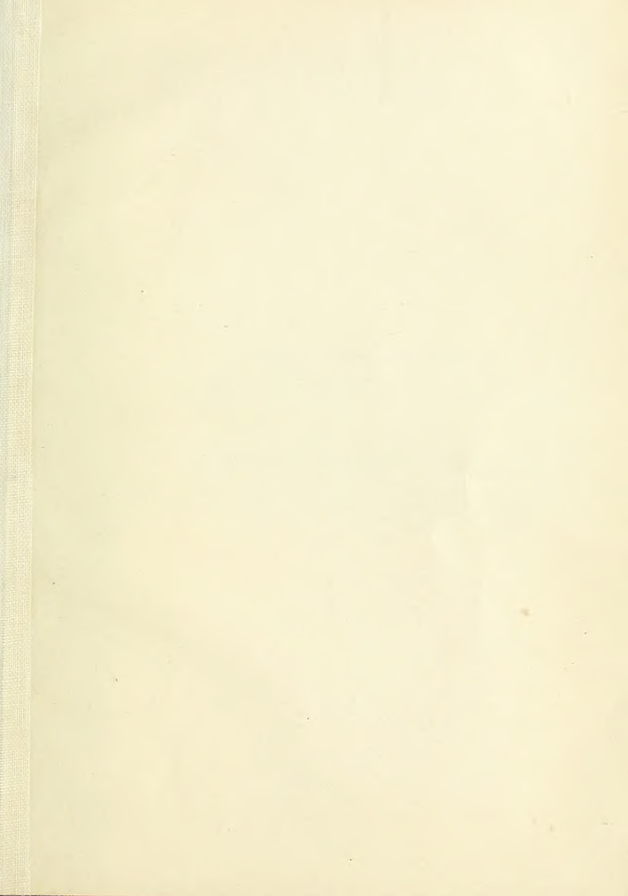
" Nobody knows ".

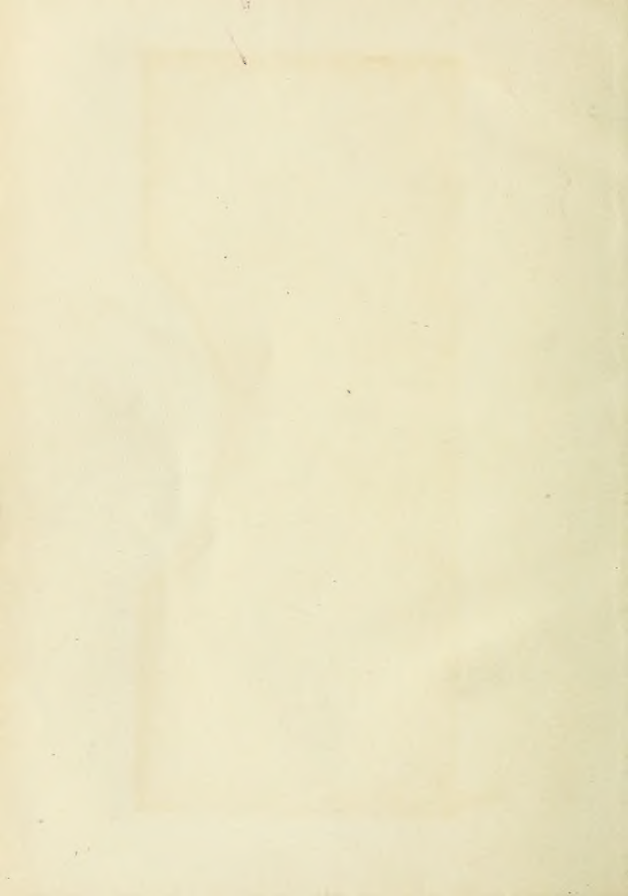
" But why," asked one of the youngest, "why didn't the Curé have it pulled down ?"

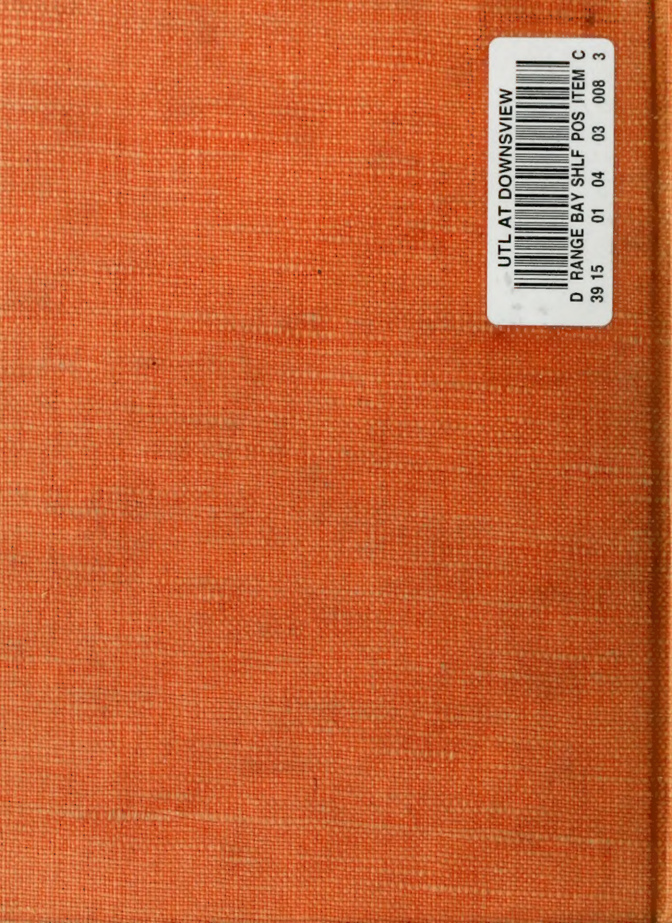
" That, my dear children, that is a story ! I heard it told by my grandfather, Jacques Hamel !"










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